

**THE NEXT GENERATION OF INFLUENCE: THE RESPONSES OF
MILLENNIAL EVANGELICALS TO MESSAGES OF GENDER EQUALITY**

A THESIS

**SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

BY

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MAY 2007

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
GLOSSARY	viii
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER	
1. THE PROBLEM AND THE SETTING	1
2. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER MUTUALITY.	40
3. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	69
4. RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCESS.	84
5. OUTCOMES OF THE RESEARCH	91
APPENDIX A SURVEY INSTRUMENT	112
APPENDIX B SURVEY RESULTS	120
APPENDIX C TOOLKIT FOR GENDER MUTUALITY	139
APPENDIX D POSITIONAL STATEMENTS FROM THE COUNCIL FOR BIBLICAL MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD AND CHRISTIANS FOR BIBLICAL EQUALITY	192
BIBLIOGRAPHY	201
VITA	212

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Percentage of Responses Relating to Female Modesty	92
2. Percentage of Responses Relating to Male Spiritual Leadership	92
3. Percentage of Responses Relating to Mutual Spiritual Leadership	92
4. Percentage of Responses Relating to Wifely Submission	92
5. Percentage of Responses Relating to Mutual Submission	92
6. Percentage of Responses Relating to Decision-Making	92
7. How Respondents' Ideologies Matched Their Church's Ideology	93
8. Percentage of Responses Relating to Church Roles	94
9. Percentage of Responses Relating to Ideologies and Family Beliefs	95
10. Percentage of Responses Relating to Influential Relationships	97
11. Percentage of Responses Relating to Relationships and Female Respondents	98
12. Percentage of Responses Relating to Relationships and Male Respondents	98
13. Percentage of Responses Relating to Female Modesty Filtered by Sex	99
14. Percentage of Responses Relating to Male Spiritual Leadership Filtered by Sex	100
15. Percentage of Responses Relating to Mutual Spiritual Leadership Filtered by Sex	101
16. Percentage of Responses Relating to Wifely Submission Filtered by Sex	102
17. Percentage of Responses Relating to Mutual Submission Filtered by Sex	102
18. Percentage of Responses Relating to Church Tasks with Sex-Filtered Responses	103
19. Percentage of Responses by Sex Relating to Ideologies with Sex-Filtered Responses	105

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The theological academy has encouraged me how to love God with my mind, growing my desire to understand Scripture, sparking my curiosity, celebrating courage, and providing me with tools for inquiry. I am deeply thankful to God for bringing me to Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and earlier, Fuller Theological Seminary.

My sincere appreciation to Gordon-Conwell for including the “Effective Ministries to Women” track in the Doctor of Ministry program. I truly believe that the ideas presented in this program would be beneficial for every seminary student. In this program I found instructors with unrelenting biblical curiosity, brilliant minds, and compassionate hospitality. I was invited to join with them in honest pursuit of truth and was not rushed to find quick, easy, or prescribed answers. Deep thanks to my heroine Alice Mathews for modeling excellence in mentorship, teaching, grace, and risk-taking.

Special thanks to Sarah Sumner for participation on my defense committee, encouragement and feedback throughout the process, and for the many ways that her life journey has paved the way for my own. Thanks to the men who participated in the interview project included in Appendix C: Gilbert Bilezikian, William Spencer, Richard Kroeger, Greg Carmer, and Walt Kaiser. I extend my appreciation to the instructors who have contributed to my understanding of the subjects included in this project: David Scholer, Catherine Kroeger, Grace Hubbard, Aida Spencer, and Gwenfair Adams.

I would also like to thank my employers, Azusa Pacific University and Gordon College. Both of these communities encouraged my studies with pragmatic and enthusiastic support. Special thanks to James “Woody” Morwood and Greg Carmer for flexibility, advocacy, and shared concern for the topics included in this research. Thanks

to the students of these colleges who are imprinted in my mind and who have motivated me to undertake this research. Thank you to my colleagues who have been patient with and supportive of me throughout this process.

The months of this project are marked with the sweet memories of friends with highlighters in hand searching for my misplaced commas and wrongly-added contractions, the touching prayers that they prayed for me and encouraging cards they sent. They endured my inflexible schedule and allowed me to verbally process my ideas. Among this group there are some who have lived in this research with me. With great thanks I acknowledge the support of Karina Bell, Erica Liu Wollin, Daren Bachman, Michal Beth Dinkler, John Dinkler, Cara DeJong, Matt DeJong, Mandy Hong, Melanie Wolf, Gina Donnelly, Carrie Nye, Angela Morgan and Geoff Jones.

Long before empirical questions were written or proposals turned in to professors, the ideas in this project were rattling around inside of me. My family watched my passions and concerns grow. They have been a great support to me not just as I wrote the questions but as I lived them. My warmest thanks to Kelly Noling Dickson, Dustin Dickson, Rick Noling, and Kathy Noling.

And, to the God who uplifts the downcast, strengthens the weak, redeems the sinner, pursues the overlooked; to the One who taught the rebellious sister, trusted the women at the tomb to testify of great news, and who chose a daughter of Eve to give birth to the Redeemer, to the One who gifts all believers with the undeserved honor of working alongside the Living God: to You be glory and honor and praise for ever and ever!

This project is dedicated to my parents,

Richard and Kathleen Noling.

Your love for God, marriage of partnership, passion for college students, and commitment to theological education have established the foundations for my own convictions and passions. You have prayed for me, challenged my ideas, reminded me of my calling, and given hours to reading and re-reading the pages that follow.

With love and thanks that I dedicate this project to you.

GLOSSARY

Complementarian. A theological position that affirms hierarchical relationships between men and women, which understands the Bible to teach limited involvement for women in the leadership and practices of the Church. *The Danvers Statement* is a doctrinal statement for this theological position, created and distributed by the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, and included in Appendix E of this study.

Egalitarian. A theological position that affirms biblical equality between men and women, and which understands the Bible to teach equal involvement for women and men in the leadership and practices of the Church. *The Statement on Men, Women and Biblical Equality* is a doctrinal statement for this theological position, created and distributed by Christians for Biblical Equality, and included in Appendix E of this study.

Evangelical. “Christians who are marked by their devotion to the sure Word of the Bible; they are committed to the inspired Scriptures as the divine rule of faith and practice. They affirm the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, including the incarnation and virgin birth of Christ, His sinless life, substitutionary atonement, and bodily resurrection as the ground of God’s forgiveness of sinners, justification by faith alone, and the spiritual regeneration of all who trust in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.”¹ “The most complex use of *evangelical* is the modern Protestant cultural usage of the word. Culturally defined evangelicals have used the modern paradigm of thought to develop a particular kind of evangelicalism encased in a culture that elevates reason and the attainment of propositional truth.”²

Gender Mutuality. Gender mutuality, gender equality, and biblical equality are, in this study, synonymous ideas. “Mutuality” by definition means, “mutual dependence; reciprocity; having the same relationship each to the other; directed and received by each toward the other; a reciprocal relation between interdependent entities.”³ When referring to *gender mutuality*, individuals of both sexes relate to each other in reciprocal, non-hierarchical relationships, giving to and receiving from the other. Gender mutuality is the idea that sex should not contribute to or justify deficits in reciprocity; nor should it have bearing on leader or follower roles.

¹ J.D. Douglas and Earle E. Cairns, eds., *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 358.

² Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 14.

³ Definition of mutuality accessed from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/mutuality>.

Alan Padgett defines *biblical equality* saying, “It is the belief that all people are equal before God and in Christ. All have equal responsibility to use their gifts and obey their calling to the glory of God. God freely calls believers to roles and ministries without regard to class, gender or race.”⁴

Millennial: Millennials are young adults born in or after 1982. This research is particularly interested in those millennials who are between the ages of 18 and 25.

⁴ Alan Padgett, “What Is Biblical Equality?” *Priscilla Papers* 16, no. 3 (Summer 2002).

ABSTRACT

This research deals with both the source and content of the messages millennial evangelicals have received about gender. In order to gain data about respondents' doctrines of gender equality, survey research and analysis were utilized to assess different aspects of gender foundations: gender roles, ideology identification, and leadership practices in the Church.

The research yielded a sample of 195 millennial evangelicals between the ages of 18-25. These statistics identify that there is an emerging reality in evangelical culture: a disparity between the teaching of the church and the theological convictions of young adults. Young evangelicals express interest in understanding biblical manhood and biblical womanhood. They are reading books, listening to sermons, and engaging in conversations with peers and mentors about these topics. Within this sample, millennials were coming to conclusions that women are equally gifted with men. Millennial evangelicals illustrate endorsement of moderate to full participation of women in church leadership and shared decision-making and mutual submission in the home.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND THE SETTING

The cafeteria was bustling with lunchtime traffic, but from our quiet corner we were captivated in conversation. She had just said, “I want to be a pastor’s wife.” I, a minister on her college campus, pressed this bright, accomplished, soon-to-be-graduating senior for more information: “Why don’t you want to be *a pastor*?” “Well, women can’t be pastors. But, I love telling people about Jesus and leading Bible studies, so I figure that I should probably *marry* a pastor.”

Who Do You Say That I Am?

As young adults grapple with the complexity of understanding maleness and femaleness, a confusing diversity of ideas confronts them. Popular culture establishes gender trends, educators teach history and philosophies of gender, and family instills gender norms, but what happens when the young adult looks for guidance from his or her evangelical church? “Who do you say that I am?”⁵ she questions. “Who do you say that I am?” he wonders. The question is significant. The way in which young adults perceive their evangelical Christian beliefs informs their understanding of themselves as gendered beings. It impacts not only their sense of identity, and their relationships with each other, but also how and where their giftedness will be pursued.

⁵ This question is borrowed from Mt 16:15 RSV, in which Jesus poses the question to Peter. At the heart of the evangelical movement has been public proclamation and personal acceptance of the lordship of Christ, and thus, this Christological question has been a popular theme in evangelical circles (as has the Great Commission in Mt 28:19,20.)

Traditionally the Christian church has taught the doctrine of gender hierarchy from the pulpit. Today young evangelicals in these churches are faced with a challenging inconsistency: hierarchical teachings of gender in evangelical culture clash with cultural norms of equal rights. Other Christian churches not only model, but preach also, doctrines of biblical equality. What remains to be seen is how the tension of mixed gender messages within the evangelical Church will impact the emerging generation of evangelical Christians, known as the Millennials. Will culturally-empowered evangelical females assume subservient roles in their homes and churches because they believe this to be biblical? Will those who hear traditionalist teachings in their churches abandon these ideas because they are not consistent with their cultural reality? Or, could perceived gender discrimination or denominational divisions motivate millennial evangelicals to abandon the church altogether?⁶

⁶ In their work, *Living on the Boundaries: Evangelical Women, Feminism and the Theological Academy*, Nicola Creegan and Christine Pohl include a letter from a student who had just begun her studies at a Bible college in the United States, "I recently read an article you wrote on the Internet about Christian feminism. I wanted to tell you that I really appreciate your viewpoints and the explanations behind them. I am so glad that I was able to read it. You see, I have been really wrestling with what my role is as a female. I considered myself a feminist in high school and studied a bit of secular feminism. I tried to keep my godly standpoints on the whole issue though. Then, in the fall of 2003, I came to Bible college. It has been difficult in some ways because I don't agree with some of their views. It is very conservative. I suppose I consider myself a conservative, nevertheless. ...I am starting to become agitated at all the labels. The teachings here really emphasize the submission of women to men, that women may not teach in the church (at least they should never advise men) and that women should not work when they are married. All of this really aggravated me at first and then I was confused. I started thinking that maybe the ways I thought before were wrong. I thought God gave me a gift for creativity. ...But suddenly I doubted all of that. I questioned myself. Were all my ambitions just pipe dreams? Was my independence just rebellion? I was confused and still am a little." Creegan and Pohl continue, "Students have opportunities to draw from multiple traditions but clearly face tensions that touch the very center of their identity and future. They come with a fragile mix of questions and

Gender equality is not a new idea to millennials. The discussion of gender equality may be as compelling for them as a discussion about the benefits of penicillin or the potential for the internet. Much of the work of the 20th century, with regard not only to gender equality, but also to civil rights, technological innovation, economic progress, international relations, and global mobility, to name a few, is being enjoyed by the millennial generation. Whereas previous generations asked questions like, “Are men and women equals?” or “Should women work outside of the home?” millennial evangelicals are more likely to ask, “Is gender mutuality compatible with evangelical Christian faith?”

The first task of the research is to understand what is being taught about gender equality in evangelical churches. The second task of the research is to understand how the newest generation of evangelicals, the Millennials, are doctrinally responding to ideologies of gender equality. (This research is concerned primarily with millennials who are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, however the research may be relevant to the younger millennials as well.)

To understand the perceptions of gender mutuality and evangelical Christianity through the eyes of millennial evangelicals, it is important to understand first predominant themes that flow through their generation.⁷ This chapter first begins with an

experiences, visions and dreams.” Nicola Creegan and Christine Pohl, *Living on the Boundaries: Evangelical Women, Feminism and the Theological Academy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005) 177.

⁷ The themes explored in this section are not absolutes, they are generalizations. The research on this American generation has focused primarily on Americans of upper-middle socioeconomic status, and thereby is not representative of the whole millennial generation. These themes seem to be particularly evident among millennials who have been highly educated, those from suburban communities, and are perhaps most representative of Caucasian young adults. Additionally, research on this generation is

examination of the culture of millennial evangelicals: who they are, and the variables that make their generational landscape pertinent to this study. Later, this chapter discusses gender mutuality and its outcomes.

The Millennial Generation

Who are they?

Their Place In History

The millennial generation was birthed during what scholars call postmodernity, an era of abstraction and relativism.⁸ Unlike the generations that went before the millennials, who valued formulas, apologetics, and clear answers, the millennial generation values meta-narrative, relationships, and tolerance.⁹ Millennials appear not to be as committed to learning the proofs of the faith that have legitimized biblical authority

still forthcoming as the oldest millennials are just beginning to graduate from four-year universities.

⁸ William Strauss and Neil Howe imply that the era of the millennials is the fourth-turning. “At the core of modern history lies this remarkable pattern: Over the past five centuries, Anglo-American society has entered a new era—a new turning—every two decades or so. At the start of each turning, people change how they feel about themselves, the culture, the nation, and the future. Turnings come in cycles of four. Each cycle spans the length of a long human life, roughly eighty to one hundred years, a unit of time the ancients called the *saeculum*. Together the four turnings of the *saeculum* comprise history’s seasonal rhythm of growth, maturation, entropy, and destruction. ...The fourth turning is a crisis, a decisive era of secular upheaval, when the values regime propels the replacement of the old civic order with a new one. ...The fourth turning is history’s great discontinuity. It ends one epoch and begins another.” William Strauss and Neil Howe, *The Fourth Turning: What Cycles of History Tell Us About America’s Next Rendezvous with Destiny*. (New York, NY: Broadway Books, 1997), 3,6

⁹ Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000.)

for the preceding generations.¹⁰ When it comes to biblical authority and ideologies in general, they value concepts, experience, and relevance.

Young adults born in or after 1982 are referred to as “millennials.” The millennials followed Generation X, a generation marked by neglect and abandonment. Generation X grew up in a time when divorces were on the rise and dual-income families were becoming the norm. Many in Generation X were latchkey kids, babysat by the television. Media programming during the childhood and adolescence of Generation X included images and music of Madonna, Michael Jackson, Kurt Cobain and MTV. Numerous movies of this era demonized children and gave heightened attention to drug use, sexuality, and punk rock culture. Then, the pendulum swung and the culture of the millennials emerged.¹¹

Millennials were born during the Reagan administration’s ‘kinder economics’, a time when advertisers were realizing that “babies sell,” and so, chubby babies became the focal point of commercials selling everything from toilet paper to tires. Child abuse and child safety became topics of widespread popular and political interest. Whereas Generation X may have been left at home to watch television, millennials were under the watchful care of what Howe and Strauss have called “Helicopter Parents,” known for

¹⁰ Robert Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002.)

¹¹ Howe and Strauss, *Millennials Rising*

hovering over their children.¹² These parents were the first to put “baby on board” signs in car windows and they became the generation of parents known as ‘soccer moms.’¹³

Equals with authority figures

Attention has been focused on millennials in ways that other generations have not experienced. Not only have educational systems, government policies, and entrepreneurs been catering to the needs of this emerging generation, but with the cultural phenomenon of dual-income families, children have often been participants in the decision-making of the household (whether it stems out of love or parental exhaustion). Additionally, with the increase in parental involvement in education and extra-curricular activities, many millennials have been the center of adult attention.

A positive outcome is that millennials actively seek out mentorship, seeing it not only as important, but central to healthy adulthood. The negative outcome is that they often view authority figures as peers. They may not adhere to rules set by their educational institutions, doctrines taught by their churches, or requests of their parents. In this generation, even Christian universities, like Azusa Pacific University, are

¹² Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Go To College. Strategies for a New Generation on Campus: Recruiting and Admissions, Campus Life, and the Classroom* (Life Course Associates, 2003) 11.

¹³ Many millennials sense the pressure to achieve. Their generation is positioned to enroll more students in the university system than any other generation in American history. With hovering parents and competition to get into their first choice universities, there has been heightened expectation on their academic performance and extracurricular involvement. Additionally, they live in a world that is constantly barraging them with information, giving them little time to listen, think, or respond. For millennials, a weekend at home may be more preferable than what may have been seen as “a once in a lifetime opportunity” to a previous generation. Millennials are accustomed to unique opportunities, so a church retreat, school dance, or service trip to Africa, may be passed up by these young adults. What may appear as apathy, may in reality be the result of an overwhelmed and exhausted generation.

tightening and re-enforcing cheating policies.¹⁴ Similarly, college chaplains observe that many millennials are living double-lives, professing one thing in their daily lives, and blogging contrasting personal data on *MySpace* and *Facebook*.¹⁵ Some university personnel notice that students are less concerned by behavioral consequences than preceding generations of students. If they are fined, they have been known to pass the bill along to their parents, seemingly unaffected by the punishment.¹⁶ Millennials are likely to presume that they know what is best for themselves and view consequences as optional inconveniences, rather than shameful or transformational.

¹⁴ With new technology, cheating has become easier for students. Text-messages, camera phones, and computers with built in video-conferencing features threaten the academic integrity of even the most rule-following students. In the 2005, Azusa Pacific University crafted the academic integrity policy, a reworked standard for integrity in the academic experience. The policy was given wide-spread attention on campus to ensure that students were aware of the expectations that Azusa Pacific University had for their academic integrity. Campus news articles were released about the policy, bookmarks printed with the policy were distributed to students, the policy was announced in chapel, and the policy's success could now be assessed yearly with an online survey instrument. Azusa Pacific University, like many Christian colleges, takes seriously the responsibility to teach students ethical decision-making and integrity-marked choices, and in the age of technology this includes clearly articulated expectations for the relationship between technology and learning.

¹⁵ In February 2006, at a discipleship ministries break-out session at the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities "CCCU International Forum," in Dallas, Texas college chaplains discussed ministry in the technological age, expressing concern at the double lives students lead, and the pros and cons of campus ministers participating in internet communities like *MySpace* and *Facebook*.

¹⁶ Karina Boslet Bell, former Resident Director at Westmont College, has observed this trend. "There were times that I would be in a discipline meeting with a student for a policy violation and the student appeared more concerned about the fact that they were "caught" than remorse for their actions. It was as if I was talking in one ear and it was coming out the other. It was as if I was inconveniencing them. They were happy to have their parents pay the bill (if a fine was applied)."

Another contributor to this phenomenon is that youthfulness has been esteemed by the culture at large. Whereas in previous generations, maturation may have been desirable, causing young adults to imitate older adults, the present-day culture encourages older adults to imitate younger adults in appearance, lifestyle, and interests. Many older adults are content to be thought of as peers of millennials, exacerbating the dilemmas of millennials relationships with their authority figures. The positive relationship with authority figures has diminished fear of, or reverence for, adult authority.

Selective Consumers

Whether it is a personalized music selection on iTunes, television programming on TVO, or an unprecedented influx of clothing styles available for purchase twenty-four-hours a day online, they are shoppers in pursuit of what satisfies them. Whether it is an object, relationship, experience, or idea, they have witnessed that determination, money, and/or the internet, can offer them almost anything they desire. Millennials are accustomed to instant gratification.

Additionally, their lives are rarely silent. When they walk to their classes, they do so to the beat of their own iPod. In their cars, they talk on their cell phones. In class and in church they are text messaging. As this large generation emerges, there are many sources vying for their buy-in to ideas, causes, and products. Even while they pump gas or wander through the mall they hear advertisements over the loud speaker.

The fads are constantly changing because they are a generation of individuals who enjoy uniqueness. They like to be the only ones wearing a style or listening to an undiscovered musician. As soon as the trend becomes popular, it collapses, because they value the undiscovered, the unique, the special. Trends turn over quickly. Millennials

watch each other for cues as to what is socially acceptable, but what seems to remain consistent is the popularity of uniqueness. This generation enjoys finding clothing at thrift stores, jewelry in their grandmother's jewelry box, and music at private concerts. Any mass-production of these items must turn-over quick enough that their peers are unlikely to have purchased the identical item and should, in design, celebrate individualism. This pursuit of individualism in fads has heightened the solicitation to this generation.

In the era of millennials, advertisements are full of twisted truth: promising individuals' beauty, popularity, comfort, rest, and intelligence. Advertisers for everything from acne medication to furniture polish parade their product's superiority compared to the insufficient performance of their competitor. What is unclear to the consumer is which advertiser is telling the truth. Political leaders declare their superiority by labeling their opponents as liars. It is not far-reaching to presume also that many of these young evangelicals have even experienced politicking from their faith communities, endorsing some Christian churches, camps, colleges, and books over others. The millennial generation has never known the American culture without the barrage of competing voices. Additionally, there is similarity between images that are real and those that are not. The evening news may seem less believable and more abundant with sensationalism, than the fictional stories they see in the movie theatres. Many millennials have developed cynicism toward the conflicting messages.

It makes sense then, that as they get older, this generation increasingly values authenticity. They desire messages, television programming, movies, leadership, and causes that tell the truth, even if the truth is unpleasant. This does not mean that they

always tell the truth. This generation has learned how to spin the truth from their political leaders, journalistic informers, and media role models. They regard the unedited truth as a personal liberty which they are free to report when, and to whom, they choose. Many of them will feel no shame in telling partial truth and withholding information if it better serves an end goal or helps a relationship. Telling the whole truth is an honor extended to those they trust and reserved for fitting situations. They may be more likely to include the gore of their personal lives to their friends on *MySpace* (which may be perceived as a fitting situation), than to tell their parents face-to-face (which *may not* be perceived as a fitting situation.) In a complicated world, their choice to tell, or not-tell, the truth is one small way to have control of their own lives.

Millennials have so much respect for authenticity, that they may be inclined to follow an honest leader, in spite of immorality and corruption, simply because they value the leader's choice to be truthful. They are drawn to honesty, even when the honest truth is not attractive. This attraction to honesty places them in a tension between being desensitized by the overload of misery they are exposed to and having a generational heart of compassion for those in duress.

Justice Minded

One of the hallmarks for millennials is social consciousness. Many of these students care about issues like economic justice, racial reconciliation, environmental advocacy, and global awareness. With increased community service requirements in the schools, millennials may have held orphaned babies, served soup to the homeless, raised money for the AIDs pandemic, built houses in poverty-stricken communities, or worked in after-school programs. Millennials are a well-educated and well-traveled generation.

College enrollment is at an all time high, and many millennials, and particularly millennial evangelicals, have traveled abroad. These young adults are not just giving financial support to these causes, they are in many cases uprooting their lives to spend a summer, a semester, or even years immersed in the lives and communities that they serve. Reciprocity is an emerging idea that this generation is beginning to embrace in their acts of service. They do not want to give to communities and causes and then abandon them. Rather, they want to live in relationship with these communities, learning from other ways of life, and in exchange teaching communities to problem-solve with tools they have learned from their own world of information.

Millennials are concerned with international gender equality causes, such as the sex slave industry and lack of education for women. However, in the United States, many millennials perceive gender equality to be a non-issue. Those who champion gender equality in the millennial generation are likely to gain the endorsement of peers in gender equality issues abroad, but may be solo-fighters for these campaigns on the home-front.¹⁷

The evangelicals among them, because of the tension of social consciousness and the Pauline passages of the New Testament (which may be understood as instilling

¹⁷ Howe and Strauss raise an interesting speculation, “Millennials don’t interpret gender and sexuality like their parents do or ever did. They look at the Boomer feminist ethos much as Boomers looked at the G.I. cult of macho, that is, as the main part of the gender landscape where some fixing is in order. The young Boomer challenge was to promote sexual independence by trashing social norms. The young millennial challenge is to create new sexual interdependence by energizing social norms. ‘My apologies, Ms. Friedan,’ says 17-year-old Sarah Abrams, ‘but the simple fact remains that there are great differences between the male and female sexes, and there is nothing wrong with recognizing them.’” (Howe and Strauss 2000, 228)

hierarchy) it is possible that they may view gender justice as irrelevant to their faith practices. Millennial evangelicals who desire to be holy or spiritual are likely to be obedient to the teachings of the church. In those churches that teach hierarchy, millennial evangelicals are likely to feel that they need to fragment their views of gender, having one doctrine for their Christian family and church roles, and another for their life in secular culture.¹⁸ Evangelicals who strive for holiness are likely to see gender equality as unrelated, or even contrary to, holiness. When holiness and gender justice are perceived as an either-or choice, it is likely that millennial evangelicals will choose holiness, and follow whatever doctrines are consistent with their understanding of holiness.¹⁹

Female-Male Relationships

An interesting dynamic to this tension between justice and faith tradition is that the millennial generation leaders are, thus far, women.

Millennial girls have done particularly well within this positive-thinking, support-filled culture of childhood and adolescence, rising in leadership positions, participating gregariously in athletics and community service, and excelling in the classroom. To this point, leading-edge Millennial girls are the generational path-breakers, setting the standards for their peers—and leading teen watchers to speak of a new ‘boy problem’ in America. Of the roughly 750,000 teens in the 1997 *Who’s Who Among High School Students*, nearly two-thirds were girls—and, among those listed, girls were twice as likely as boys to have “A” grade averages.

¹⁸ It is likely that these millennial evangelicals perceive there to be different extremes of the gender equality issue. They may agree that men and women should have sex-differentiated jobs in the home, church and maybe even in the workplace, justifying this position by saying that men and women are of equal worth but still created for different work. This perspective of a spectrum of gender equality issues would enable these millennials to take up issues of international injustice, without having to address the inconsistencies of gender equality at home.

¹⁹ It is unlikely that evangelicals will all understand holiness in the same way, and for millennial evangelicals this is compounded by a culture that embraces relativism, believing that what is good for one person may not be good for another.

Another study has shown that, among America's top academic achievers, 63 percent are girls.²⁰

In Christian culture, where messages of female submission are prominent, females who have education and leadership experience may be inclined to let less qualified males take leadership of school group-work projects and even dating relationships because many of them have been taught that the males are intended by God to lead females.²¹ Males often assume leadership in these situations, trusting that there is something about their maleness that makes them qualified. Some males may not be accustomed to leading their female peers but assume these roles by default.²²

²⁰ Howe and Strauss, *Millennials Rising*, 223.

²¹ Though the term "spiritual leader" is not actually in Scripture it is used widely in evangelical culture. This term leaves many questions to the creativity of the hearer. For example, what is unclear from this term is *where* they are to lead, *how* this is to play out in daily life, and *why* a leader is necessary in a dyad.

²² Out of the CCCU's May Term Women's Studies program, grew an anthology edited by Nancy Linton and Elizabeth Morgan entitled, *Home is Where You Are Going*. In this work Linton and Morgan comment on the late-adolescent development of females and males. "Girls coming of age find their authentic relationships hard to maintain, and Gilligan's research indicates that often by late adolescence they have given up on openness and honesty in favor of idealized relationships, or if they keep their voices, they may drop out of school or other institutions silencing them. But, at core, girls resist these losses and can rediscover voice and constructive agency if encouraged by parents, older women, or other adults who remain in relationship to them while they renegotiate their childhood connections. Schooled in the "Boy Code," named by Joseph Pollack in *Real Boys*, males learn early on they must avoid anything considered sissy stuff, become paragons of stability and self-reliance, and at all costs compete for the limited commodity of being on top, a position always in danger of slippage if one is not masculine enough, not willing to take dangerous risks, or if one shows a wider range of emotions than anger, the acceptable way of expressing fear or sadness. ... Hope of transformation comes as boys are allowed freedom to stay attached to caretakers even after they begin school, are not shamed for expressing a wide range of feelings, and have in their life mentors and role models of both genders who can advocate for their full personhood." Nancy Linton and Elizabeth Morgan, *Home Is Where You Are Going: Crossing Borders and Risking Solidarity Through Women's Studies* (Saint Paul, MN: 2005) 36-37.

Many evangelical churches have encouraged congregants to strive for clear distinctions between male and female.²³ Idealizing and celebrating masculine strength and feminine beauty are distinctions biblically justified with the statements like: woman was created to be man's helper and her beauty is for her husband, and in exchange, man should be woman's physical protector. These values for beauty and strength create a dilemma that evangelical hierarchy places on millennials: the choice to obey the church-endorsed message that womanly beauty and manly strength are components of godliness or to fight against the American culture's obsessions with physical enhancement through hyper-sanitization, artificial beauty and gym-purchased strength. Does the godly young woman conform to cultural standards of beauty or resist them? Does the godly young man work toward the masculinity model of physical strength as a component of his discipleship or should he find contentment in his meager frame? This again speaks to the tension between holiness and justice that millennial evangelicals face.²⁴

Additionally, embedded in the evangelical culture is a subtle message that encourages young adults to marry early.²⁵ The problem that Mathews and Hubbard

²³ Ironically, in these same evangelical settings, there is often little distinction between male and female spirituality. Though different programming may exist for males and females this is usually philosophically related to relational differences between the sexes rather than spiritual differences. When it comes to the spiritual life, males and females are often seen to be similar. However, when it comes to the life of the body or to relationships, males and females are regarded as highly different from the other.

²⁴ Brumberg addresses the concern that the beauty industry has become lucrative business in America, finding insecurities and flaws that can be treated and then marketing their remedies as necessities for beauty. Joan Brumberg, *The Body Project* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1997.)

²⁵ "Despite the fact that Christians pay lip service to the equal value of married and single people, the near-idolatry of the family over the past century has made single Christians feel like second-class citizens at best and moral failures at worst." Alice

identify is that the postmodern person is in a constant process of change.²⁶ Who this young adult may be in September may be altogether different in December, after a semester abroad, a campus leadership position, or a thought-provoking course.

Millennials are in pursuit of a mate who can relate to their experiences, ideas, and feelings despite the constant change they are personally undergoing; they are looking for a mate who will change at the same rate and in the same ways. They are looking not only to be understood but also to marry quickly.²⁷ Ironically, few millennials date and so the isolation grows for this generation of individuals.

Church Culture

Millennials are a part of an evangelical generation that Robert Webber calls, “the younger evangelicals.” Webber’s description of the young evangelical priorities is compared to their predecessors in Figure One.²⁸

Palmer Mathews and M. Gay Hubbard, *Marriage Made In Eden: A Pre-modern Perspective for a Post-Christian World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 214.

²⁶ Mathews and Hubbard identify that as a result of postmodernity, in which the self is continually being created and transformed through experiences, education, information, ideas, and relationships, choosing a life partner is an increasingly difficult task. “The implications of such a ‘fleeting self’ are far-reaching, particularly in marriage. In postmodern reality, viewed in simple terms, the self that chose a partner in spring may have become by autumn a distinctly different self whose needs and preferences necessitate a different partner.” Mathews and Hubbard, *Marriage Made In Eden*, 42.

²⁷ “A woman my age should be in the happily-ever-after set—not still searching for Mr. Right. If a thirty-something woman hadn’t tied the knot, folks thought something was wrong with her.” Sherri Langton, “A Woman’s Worth” *Mutuality* 11, no. 2 (Fall 2002) 8.

²⁸ Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals*, 17.

Figure 1: The Younger Evangelicals

	Traditional Evangelical Era 1950-1975	Pragmatic Evangelical Era 1975-2000	Younger Evangelical Era 2000-
Cultural Situation	Modern worldview Industrial society Post WWII	Transitional paradigm Technological society Vietnam War	Postmodern worldview Internet society War on terrorism
Communication Styles	Print Verbal	Broadcast Presentational	Internet Interactive
Generation	Booster Traditional	Boomer Innovative	“Twenty-something” Deconstruction/ Reconstruction
Attitude Toward History	Maintain distinctives of twentieth-century fundamentals	Get a fresh start Ahistorical	Draw from the wisdom of the past The road to the future runs through the past
Theological Commitment	Christianity as a rational worldview	Christianity as therapy Answers needed	Christianity as a community of faith Ancient/Reformation
Apologetics Style	Evidential Foundational	Christianity as meaning- giver Experiential Personal faith	Embrace the metanarrative Embodied apologetic Communal faith
Ecclesial Paradigm	Constantinian church Civil Religion	Culturally sensitive church Market driven	Missional church Countercultural
Church Style	Neighborhood churches Rural	Megachurch Suburban Market targeted	Small church Back to cities Intercultural
Leadership Style	Pastor centered	Managerial model CEO	Team ministry Priesthood of all
Youth Ministry	Church-centered programs	Outreach programs Weekend fun retreats	Prayer, Bible study, worship, social service
Education	Sunday school Information centered	Target generational groups and needs	Intergenerational formation in community
Spirituality	Keep the rules	Prosperity and success	Authentic embodiment
Worship	Traditional	Contemporary	Convergence
Art	Restrained	Art as illustration	Incarnational embodiment
Evangelism	Mass evangelism	Seeker service	Process evangelism
Activists	Beginnings of evangelical social action	Need-driven social action (i.e., divorce groups, drug rehab, etc.)	Rebuild cities and neighborhoods

These dynamics play out in how the millennials understand and practice the Christian

faith. Webber, characterizes the faith of young evangelicalism in these ways:

- They are conscious that they grew up in a postmodern world. This has led to a recovery of the biblical understanding of human nature and created a new context for ministry.
- They acknowledge that they differ with the pragmatist’s approach to ministry.
- They know that they must minister in a new paradigm of thought.

- They know that they must stand for the absolutes of the Christian faith in a new way.
- They recognize that the road to the future runs through the past.
- They are primarily committed to the plight of the poor, especially in our urban centers.
- They are willing to live by the rules.
- They are technologically capable and highly visual.
- They communicate through stories and grasp the power of imagination (which has led to the resurgence of the arts).
- They appreciate symbols.
- They yearn to belong to a community.²⁹
- They are highly committed to multicultural communities of faith and drawn to intergenerational ministries.
- They are attracted to absolutes and are not afraid of commitment.³⁰
- They value shared wisdom and authenticity.
- They realize the unity between thought and action.³¹

²⁹Chap Clark, in his book, *Hurt*, identifies that there has been a breakdown of community in all youth-focused systems. Rather than functioning as a group, or whole, young adults are functioning in clusters. Clark points out that the youth systems, like the high school class levels, team sports, and church youth ministries, presuppose that these young adults know how to function together and relate to each other. The reality is, however, that now more than ever, they are drawn toward homogeneous clusters for survival in systems where they often feel different, or not understood. Chap Clark, *Hurt: Inside The World of Today's Teenagers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004.)

³⁰ This may be a factor which could impact their responses to evangelical teaching about gender.

³¹ Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals*, 47-53.

What is evident from these descriptions is that millennial evangelicals have Christian values that correlate with the themes of their generation. They value personal attention and connection, social action, and, in many cases, tradition and historical context for faith. They are less concerned with “right and wrong,” like their grandparents’ generation of evangelicals, or with “formulas for church growth” like their parents’ generation, reflected in the mega-church movement. They desire authenticity of faith and action that corresponds with belief.

How Does This Information Relate to Gender Doctrines?

These generational characteristics may provide foreshadowing for millennials’ responses to gender mutuality. Millennials view themselves as equals with authority figures, which may foreshadow a lack of dependence on their church and familial religious doctrines. They may rely on their own understanding of the issues and create doctrines that parallel the realities that they intuit are right. Additionally, this may mean that not only will they resist the doctrines of their authority figures, but they also may completely disregard the practices expected of them by these authority figures even when they are under the leadership of these authority figures, regarding their own opinions with an equal or greater value. This consumer generation may avoid churches that do not uphold favored doctrines.

Millennials may have received arguments for both gender hierarchy and gender mutuality due to the message-profuse culture that they live in, but the scant quantity of time that is message-free, may foreshadow lack of time to think for themselves. Though their justice concern may seem consistent with gender mutuality, there is the possibility

that millennial evangelicals may view gender mutuality as incompatible with evangelical Christianity, particularly in the church and in the home environments.

Millennials have experienced female leadership, watching females rise as leaders in the classroom, extracurricular activities, and social causes. When preceding generations asked the question, “Where are the men?” they meant, “Men are entitled to these positions and they are being led by women.” When millennials ask the question, “Where are the men?” they literally mean, “Where are the men?” Women are in abundance in this generation, both in number and in strength of voice. Potentially, this phenomenon may lead to female millennials backing down from leadership positions so that men may have equal opportunities.³² However, in these instances, there is likely to be awkwardness, because these men may not be natural or trained leaders, like the females of the generation. Should gifted females of this generation back down from leadership, allowing their lesser-achieving, male counterparts to lead, depression may settle on the females who know the right answers but are self-silencing. On the other hand, female renunciation of leadership in the millennial generation could lead to voluntary and self-congratulating re-embracing of traditional male-female roles. Women may choose the role of the submissive follower.

Finally, this generation has been barraged with information, in many cases, to the point of exhaustion. Even though this generation places high value on authenticity, they

³² Creegan and Pohl explain, “Despite the fact that conversations within the evangelical world are widening, the gender assumptions within much of popular evangelicalism keep the door open to disappointing reversals, as has been seen in several conservative denominations in recent years. The covert nature of much gender conflict allows for quite sudden and unexpected appearances of its effects.” Creegan and Pohl, *Living on the Boundaries*, 180.

are likely to forego authenticity and truth unintentionally, for that which is convenient and likable. They may buy the messages that are packaged in the most desirable way, rather than those messages which have the most-researched or relationally-healthy content, for a lack of remaining energy to search out lesser-known messages. When it comes to gender messages, depth of scholarship will most likely not appeal widely to this generation. The fun-to-read doctrines, presented through compelling narrative, that are relevant to their cultural reality, and do not subject them to the time-consuming and information-intensive work of sorting through even more data than their intense daily lives prescribe: it is these doctrines which are likely to win the millennial evangelicals.

Gender Mutuality

Why Does It Matter If They Are Taught About Gender Mutuality?

Mary Field Belenky suggests³³ that the people and ideas to which authority is granted will inform decisions, lifestyle, and understandings.

We do not think of the ordinary person as preoccupied with such difficult questions and profound questions as: What is truth? What is authority? To whom do I listen? What counts for me as evidence? How do I know what I know? Yet to ask ourselves these questions and to reflect on our answers is more than an intellectual exercise, for our basic assumptions about the nature of truth and reality and the origins of knowledge shape the way we see the world and ourselves as participants in it. They affect our definitions of ourselves, the way we interact with others, our public and private personae, our sense of control over life events, our views of teaching and learning, and our conceptions of morality.³⁴

³³ Mary Field Belenky and others, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

³⁴ Ibid., 3.

When an idea is thought of as being God's will, it will rarely be challenged. As Max Weber said, "The sacred is uniquely unalterable."³⁵ When millennial evangelicals strive for holiness, they must first learn what holiness entails. As Belenky suggests, it is moments such as these, when one determines to whom she or he will grant authority. Will the young adult turn to the family, to the church, to the Scriptures, to popular literature, to an educator, or to a peer for the answer?³⁶ What remains to be seen is which ideas are being understood by millennial evangelicals as God's will: gender hierarchy or gender mutuality?

With the dawning of the information age, came an abundance of literature written for evangelical Christians, teaching sacred gender norms.³⁷ In recent years, some of the

³⁵ Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963.)

³⁶ Barbara Blodgett in her work, *Constructing the Erotic: Sexual Ethics and Adolescent Girls* exposes the tension for young adults of choosing which voices to listen to, "Girls still hear, that they should save themselves (that is, reserve the act of intercourse) for Mr. Right, and yet they see the scorn men give to women who wait. In other words, the ethics of sexual choice are not at all clear to girls, despite how keen girls are for guidance. By and large, adolescent girls are preoccupied with doing the right thing..." Barbara Blodgett, *Constructing the Erotic: Sexual Ethics and Adolescent Girls* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2002) 6.

³⁷ In her cultural survey, Mathews' research identifies the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the family unit, driving the sexes into occupations away from the home, bringing fragmentation to the familial teamwork mentality, disposing the heirloom of family business, and creating separate spheres of manhood and womanhood. In the decades following the Industrial Revolution, a crisis of identity emerged for men and women, systematized factories replaced the creativity and uniqueness that accompanied family business and gendered identity. Since then, the church and the culture at large have grappled for easy definitions to questions of gender difference. Alice Mathews, *Preaching That Speaks To Women* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003.) Van Leeuwen explains that the result of the Industrial Revolution for males has for the last century meant that boys grew up without the daily male role model that they had access to in the familial-based economic structure in pre-Industrial Revolution America. Whereas children of both sexes spent the days with both parents, learning and participating in the family business, the Industrial Revolution primarily sent fathers away

more popular and agenda-revealing titles have included: *Dateable: Are You? Are They?*³⁸ *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*;³⁹ *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*;⁴⁰ *Lady in Waiting: Becoming God's Best While Waiting for Mr. Right*;⁴¹ and *Boy Meets Girl: Say Hello to Courtship*.⁴²

from the home for work, leaving definitions of manhood to the quiet observations of young boys. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, *My Brother's Keeper: What that Social Sciences Do (And Don't) Tell Us About Masculinity* (Intervarsity Press, 1990), 22.

³⁸ Hayley Morgan and Justin Lookadoo, *Dateable: Are You? Are They?* In a book review published in *Mutuality: The Voice of Christians for Biblical Equality* Jessica Gaylord writes, "Every time I visit a Christian bookstore, the section on teenage dating has grown. Many of the books advocate for alternate dating methods like courtship, others promote sexual purity and some denounce the dating process altogether. Each book has its own angle, but it's apparent that a substantial number of books are tackling the issues associated with adolescent relationships." Gaylord continues, "An integral concept of the *Dateable* series is the idea that 'men need to be men' and 'women need to be women.' Independence and competitiveness are 'guy qualities.' Readers are told, '*Dateable* guys know that they aren't as sensitive as girls and that's okay. They know that they are stronger, more dangerous, and more adventurous and that's okay too. *Dateable* guys are real men who aren't afraid to be guys. ... Since the day that first caveman swatted at the giant pterodactyl, men have been the tough ones. We fight the wars, save the country, and rescue the beauties. It's God's plan so we can't argue. We gotta break stuff, kill things, and get dirty. It's just part of the male nature." Jessica Gaylord, "Rules to Date By: Are Teens Receiving Unhealthy Messages About Dating?" *Mutuality* 11, no. 2 (Summer 2004) 13.

³⁹ Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye: A New Attitude Toward Relationships and Romance* (Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 1997).

⁴⁰ John Piper and Wayne Grudem (eds.), *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991).

⁴¹ Jackie Kendall and Debby Jones, *Lady in Waiting: Becoming God's Best While Waiting for Mr. Right* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2005).

⁴² Joshua Harris, *Boy Meets Girl: Say Hello to Courtship* (Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, Inc, 2000.)

In a particularly popular evangelical series, John Eldredge speculates that, “In the heart of *every* man is a desperate desire for a battle to fight, an adventure to live, and a beauty to rescue [emphasis mine].”⁴³ And “*every* woman in her heart of hearts longs for three things: to be romanced, to play an irreplaceable role in a great adventure, and to unveil beauty [emphasis mine].” Eldredge claims that the fundamental question every woman asks is “Am I lovely?”⁴⁴ whereas every man asks the question “Have I got what it takes?”⁴⁵ presuming that the fundamental questions of human existence are different for males and for females. Eldredge’s books have become widely popular, influencing the fabric of evangelical American manhood and womanhood with traditional gender-roles made culturally palatable.

With numerous voices claiming to know the secret of manhood and womanhood, some of whom offer opinions and passion, others of whom offer research and insight, millennials are left to determine for themselves the authoritative voices to whom they will listen. Many do not have to think about gender doctrine until they are faced with some kind of decision. A question like, “When I go on a date, who will pay?” can be answered only after allying oneself, either consciously or subconsciously, with an ideology of gender, perhaps one that was imparted to the young adult in childhood, or perhaps a new found ideology picked up in a classroom, a book, or conversation.⁴⁶ These

⁴³ John Eldredge and Stasi Eldredge, *Captivating: Unveiling the Mystery of a Woman’s Soul* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 9.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁵ Eldredge, *Wild at Heart*, 57.

⁴⁶ In a book review, Gaylord writes “At the end of *The Dateable Rules*, readers are encouraged to commit to a list of rules designed to increase ‘dateability.’ Some of the

questions, the kinds that present themselves to young adults daily, cannot (and most certainly will not) wait for the young adult to come to a clear and decisive ideological conclusion before imposing entrance. “As a man, is it my responsibility to open that door for her?” “Would it be weird for me to be the only woman in that major?” “Do I plan my life goals now or do I wait until after I find someone I want to marry?”

If a young adult believes it is “the man’s job to pay for the date” because this is what men do on dates, then this ideology will act as a foundation. On the other hand, if he/she believes that expenses should be shared by male and female, because male and female are equal participants in the relationship, this will act as an ideological foundation for decision-making. But, which sacred unalterables, to borrow the language of Weber, have young evangelicals heard from their faith communities?

The Evangelical Debate

For many evangelicals, the Bible is the sacred unalterable, the foundation, used for building ideologies of gender. The Bible for these evangelicals is like a lens through which to see the world; a guiding light for understanding self and others. Even so, evangelicals come to different conclusions about what Scripture means to say to the twenty first century. This is partly because some of the cultural components of these ancient writings have been forgotten over time and so there are some passages that are

girls’ rules include letting him lead, needing him and being mysterious. The guys’ rules include standing up like a real man, controlling how far their dating relationships go physically and keeping the women in their lives ‘covered up.’ Perhaps the discussion with teens regarding relationships would be more fruitful if the focus was on a different list. I suggest we look to a list in Gal 5:22-23, which includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. ...As God’s sons and daughters, living by the Spirit should be our primary concern.” Jessica Gaylord, “Rules to Date By,” 15.

not immediately clear to the reader, outside of their original context. Evangelical churches regard teaching the original context of Scripture with differing value.⁴⁷ This differing value impacts the conclusions of evangelicals about the unclear biblical passages.

Evangelicals find general consensus in the doctrine that God is the creator of the world and that after creating the world, God created a human for the purpose of divine relationship and to care for the earth. Where the disagreement (relevant to this discussion of gender) begins is with the creation of the second human. In some evangelical churches, the doctrine of gender hierarchy is held, teaching that woman was created second and that being created second in and of itself reveals God's design for a subordinate relationship of woman to her husband: God created woman specifically for the task of helping her husband.

In other evangelical churches, the doctrine of gender mutuality is held. In this doctrine, God had always intended to create two humans: one male and one female (just as was done with all of the animals who were created prior to the creation of the humans), and this division of time between the creation of the first human and the second human

⁴⁷ Creegan and Pohl say, "For many evangelicals, and in many stereotypes of evangelical experience, churches are places where conversion is emphasized but questions are not encouraged. When a crisis of faith emerges, subjectivity and objective faith appear to be in conflict. These crises for us [Creegan and Pohl] were less burdensome because the questioning was encouraged [at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary] and the Holy Spirit was so real as to be undeniable. Questioning and doubt were not defined out of the Christian's experience, but rather included as an integral part of real faith. This also gave us a more nuanced hermeneutic; there was little chance that we would assume it was possible to go directly from text to the present day without attention to context and story, a tendency in certain strands of evangelicalism. Where questions are welcomed, there is an implicit understanding that interpretation is difficult, communal and contextual." Creegan and Pohl, *Living on the Boundaries*, 15,16.

illustrates God's design for humanity: relationship first with Deity, and second for relationship with one another. This doctrine holds that the same purposes were given to the female human as to the male human in the Garden of Eden, and that any power struggle or gender difference would come as the result of human disobedience to God rather than out of God's creation intention.

Though hierarchy and mutuality are both argued from a biblical perspective, these ideas may not be equally beneficial ideas for their adherents.⁴⁸ As the following section illustrates gender mutuality leads to many facets of personal and interpersonal health, whereas the forthcoming studies of hierarchy unveil the perils of the traditional view of gender.⁴⁹ The evangelical community has often criticized gender equality, likening it to the bra-burning, female-dominant, lesbianism-endorsing culture of radical feminism. The forthcoming studies suggest, however, that gender equality is not violent or man-hating, but as the name insists, grants equality for men, just as it does for women. The following section of this chapter provides an abbreviated analysis of the studies that suggest the

⁴⁸ In the culture of evangelicalism, ideas of gender are generally not initiated on the basis of benefits for the individual or the couple, but more so with desire to be obedient to the teachings of Scripture. Many evangelicals will assume that even though an ideology may be uncomfortable to carry out, God must have a greater purpose for imposing the discomfort, a purpose that the human mind cannot fully comprehend. Though for many evangelicals, the benefits associated with ideology may not be significant contributors to their selection thereof, however, for the purposes of this research, the impact of ideologies on quality of life is a factor worthy of consideration.

⁴⁹ This project is specifically designed to gather information about gender mutuality, so this limitation may be a reflection of the scope of the research. However there is surprising little research to be found on the topic of gender hierarchy's benefits for personal and interpersonal health.

healthy outcomes of gender mutuality and those studies which call for gender mutuality as a more redemptive alternative.

Does Gender Mutuality Work?

Cynthia Neal and Michael Mangis⁵⁰ express concern for the outcomes of hierarchy for college women in romantic relationships. Of the 332 Christian college women, who were asked “Have there ever been any times that you have been sexually involved with any person against your will or when you wanted to say no but didn’t or couldn’t?”,⁵¹ 51 percent indicated that they had experienced an unwanted sexual incident.⁵² Astoundingly, those subjects who reported unwanted sexual experiences rated their fathers’ and mothers’ views of women as significantly more traditional than subjects who did not report unwanted sexual experiences. Of these respondents, 55 percent of the women explained a figurative “loss of voice” as a factor in the unwanted sexual experience. Neal and Mangis report: “Growing up in environments where women are defined as more passive and subservient to men may leave young women more susceptible to assault and with less of a ‘voice’ to be able to bring a stop to unwanted sexual experiences.”

⁵⁰ C. A. Neal, and M.M. Mangis, “Unwanted Sexual Experiences Among Christian College Women: Saying No On The Inside” (*Journal of Psychology and Theology* 23, no. 3, 1995) 171-179.

⁵¹ Ibid., This might include kissing, petting, intercourse, or any degree of physical intimacy with any acquaintance, family member, friend, or stranger.

⁵² Ibid., Of these incidents, 126 (72%) occurred in adolescence or young adulthood.

In an epistemological study of the experience and problems with women as learners and knowers, Belenky and her colleagues conducted in-depth interviews of 135 women. What they had not anticipated was an expanded understanding of the word ‘voice.’

Well after we were into our interviews with women, we became aware that it is a metaphor that can apply to many aspects of women’s experience and development. In describing their lives, women commonly talked about voice and silence: ‘speaking up,’ ‘speaking out,’ ‘being silenced,’ ‘not being heard,’ ‘really listening,’ ‘really talking,’ ‘words as weapons,’ ‘feeling deaf and dumb,’ ‘having no words,’ ‘saying what you mean,’ ‘listening to be heard,’ and so on in an endless variety of connotations all having to do with the sense of mind, self-worth, and feelings of isolation from or connection to others. We found that women repeatedly used the metaphor of voice to depict their intellectual and ethical development, and that the development of a sense of voice, mind, and self were intricately intertwined.

What came of Belenky’s study was the development of a model of knowing, built upon Perry’s epistemological scheme, explaining how a woman’s experience had shaped the way she understands herself, her relationships, and the world around her. They grouped women’s perspectives on knowing into five major epistemological categories: *silence*, a position in which women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority; *received knowledge*, a perspective from which women conceive of themselves as capable of receiving, even reproducing, knowledge from the all-knowing external authorities but not capable of creating knowledge on their own; *subjective knowledge*, a perspective from which truth and knowledge are conceived of as personal, private, and subjectively known or intuited; *procedural knowledge*, a position in which women are invested in learning and applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge; and *constructed knowledge*, a position in which women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of

knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing.⁵³ Belenky's findings, like Neal and Mangis', reveal that loss of voice can be holistically destructive, the cost of which may be her very sense of self and the world around her.

In her work with incest survivors, Annie Imbens-Fransen⁵⁴ reports that hierarchical religious ideologies, and specifically those of Judeo-Christian religions, have contributed to the disempowerment of women and girl children by condoning or fostering sexual violence against them.⁵⁵ She identifies three distinct theological constructs as especially dangerous: first, it is assumed that God primarily created man, not woman, as a woman is believed to have been created from man's rib; second, woman and not man was the primary agent of "man's fall;" third, woman was created not only from man but also *for* man.

Among her anecdotal evidence are four narratives of the relationship between Judeo-Christian theological constructs and violence against women:

⁵³ Belenky and others, *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 18.

⁵⁴ Annie Imbens-Fransen, "The Impact of Religious Education on Incest Survivors," *Listening* 24, no. 1 (1999): 22-24.

⁵⁵ Imbens-Fransen reports the following statistics on sexual abuse: "In the United States, one in three girls is sexually abused before turning eighteen. In South Africa, one in two women is raped at least once in her lifetime. In Peru, one of every four girl children will be the victim of sexual abuse before reaching her sixteenth birthday. In the Netherlands, 34 percent of women have been sexually abused within the family or by someone outside the family prior to their sixteenth birthday. In a national study, it was found that of 1,054 women between twenty and forty years of age who were interviewed, 15.6 percent had experienced sexual abuse by a male relative prior to their sixteenth birthday. Twenty-five percent of this group experienced the abuse prior to their tenth birthday. Ibid.

[One] survivor who was abused by her stepfather for more than thirty years explained that scripture prevented her from stopping the abuse and bound her to secrecy. She always had to read the text 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 before her stepfather raped her. “Love is patient; love is kind... It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful... It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things...”

“They kept telling you that sex was the girl’s responsibility. If the girl had preserved her chastity like she should, the boy wouldn’t have gotten out of control.” Margaret, an incest survivor.

“Sometimes I asked my father why he kept making me do this. Then he said, ‘All women are the same as that first woman, Eve. You tempt me. In your heart, this is what you want, just like Eve.’” Nell, an incest survivor.⁵⁶

One survivor was told by her father that she had to ask God for forgiveness when she cried during the abuse. He interpreted her crying as defying her father and acting against God’s will.

Imbens-Fransen found that not only are these women victimized by their theological training, but so too were their mothers. Often in Christian marriage ceremonies, the text Eph 5:22-33 is used, exhorting wives to submit to their husbands. Mothers who had internalized this androcentric Christian view of marriage trained their daughters to satisfy the expectations and demands of their male family members. Studies have shown wife abuse to be nearly three times more likely when the husband dominates

⁵⁶ Imbens-Fransen comments, “On one hand, the women were taught in church, school, and home that they were supposed to be humble, self-sacrificing, dutiful, pure, loving, and subservient, like female saints and Mary, the mother of Jesus. On the other hand, women were labeled as sinful, seductive, and evil like Eve who tempted Adam. They learned that most women in the Bible were whores, diseased, sinful, or possessed by the devil. In addition, the commandment, “Honor your father and your mother” (Ex 20:12) was deeply ingrained in incest survivors’ minds.” Ibid.

decision making than when the wife dominated, and roughly eight times more likely than in egalitarian marriages.⁵⁷

Imbens-Fransen found the following complications to recovery: first, they consistently viewed God as male and generally as a father figure. Second, survivors sought to earn God's favor so that God would end the sexual abuse. They tried increasingly to satisfy God's expectations of women. When incest continued, they began to doubt themselves. They assumed that they had brought the abuse upon themselves. Third, they believed that God may have intended the incest for a specific purpose, therefore, they simply had to learn to accept it and to forgive their offenders. Fourth, when they went to pastors, counselors, or members of the family, they were often told to forgive the offender unconditionally. This attitude toward forgiveness burdened them with new guilt feelings on top of their shame for having let the incest happen.

Donna Chung's findings⁵⁸ revealed that fifteen out of the twenty-five young women who were interviewed had experienced harassment or unwanted attention from men on at least one occasion. Chung argues that young adulthood is a significant time in the development of gender ideology and sees dating as a significant place of this construction. Her study found that the interviews showed various aspects of how romantic love is used to divert attention away from behaviors being interpreted as male control of women and instead were interpreted as signs of love and commitment. (E.g.,

⁵⁷ J.C. Babcock, "Power and Violence: The Relation Between Communication Patterns, Power Discrepancies, and Domestic Violence," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 61, no. 1 (1993): 40-50.

⁵⁸ Donna Chung, "Violence, Control, Romance and Gender Equality: Young Women and Heterosexual Relationships," *Women's Studies International Forum* 28, no. 6 (December 2005): 445-455.

Some young women described their boyfriend's policing of their behavior or clothes as a sign of his love with jealousy as the signifier. This was not considered male behavior which was aimed at controlling young women. In some young men's and women's interviews men were considered 'protectors' of women against predatory men. This knight in shining armor role included boyfriends accompanying young women to all social events to protect her from other men's unwanted attentions. Young men's use of the term 'ownership' in relation to their girlfriends was presented as a sign of their true love and not that she was considered property of the male.) In these examples, romantic love enables young women to interpret young men's behaviors in ways that are not signs of power and control, instead representing intimacy and love. Additionally, Chung found that it emphasized desire for the 'other' and positioned the woman as emotional and the man as rational.⁵⁹

On a global scale, the absence of mutuality has had more severe consequences. The United Nations Population Fund has identified gender inequality as a significant root of international poverty.⁶⁰ They hold that gender equality is first and foremost a human right; and is essential to achieving the Millenium Development Goals, that serve as a framework for halving poverty and improving lives. In July 2005, Thoraya Ahmed

⁵⁹ Ibid., 445-455.

⁶⁰ Seven priorities for action have been identified by the Education and Gender Task Force in order to achieve gender equality. These include: educational opportunities (primary and post-primary) for women, access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, reducing time burdens, guaranteeing property and inheritance rights, improving income-generating opportunities, improving political participation, and reducing violence against girls and women.

Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a joint statement with Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, stated,

Gender equality is a key issue in building communities, reducing poverty and helping to save lives. The costs of inequality are high. They include harmful traditional practices that place the lives of women and girls at risk. They include lost productivity, high health care costs and generations destined to an endless cycle of poverty and want. For tens of millions of girls, early marriage and childbearing mean an incomplete education, limited opportunities and serious health risks.

Gnanadason suggests,

“Whatever its form, violence has its roots in distorted power relations. Patriarchal violence has not been adequately understood nor acknowledged as a necessary framework for analyzing structural inequalities in society.”⁶¹

Where gender mutuality is present, there is often a higher degree of happiness in marriage.⁶² Alice Mathews found that those who held strongly egalitarian beliefs about marital roles tended to have the happiest marriages and those who held strongly hierarchical beliefs expressed greater dissatisfaction with their marriages. For both men and women, the relationship between beliefs concerning biblical teachings⁶³ about marital roles and the degree of happiness in the marriage were related: the more hierarchical these beliefs, the more dissatisfied the subject is with the quality of his or her

⁶¹ Imbens-Fransen, “The Impact of Religious Education on Incest Survivors,” 22-34.

⁶² Alice Palmer Mathews, “Prescription and Description: The Gap Between the Promise and the Reality in Women’s Experience of Hierarchical Marriage.” (Ph.D. diss., The Illiff School of Theology and the University of Denver, 1996)

⁶³ Participants were asked to state their beliefs about the teachings of the Bible in four areas: general roles, sex, decision-making, and earning and spending patterns.

marriage as measured by the ingredients the subject has earlier stated would characterize a happy marriage.

Colleen Colaner and Susan Warner found that where mutuality is present, career aspirations of women increase.⁶⁴ In their study, women with complementarian attitudes were not as likely to desire advanced graduate degrees. Egalitarianism influenced one's desire for a job; more specifically, egalitarian women desired jobs with purpose, jobs that provided opportunity for advancement, and jobs that offered leadership and management. Women who viewed themselves as equal with men were more willing to consider vocational goals in their life choices. Colaner and Warner observe,

If their desires to attain success in the workforce are limited by their gender ideology, then we can expect to see fewer evangelical Christian women attaining career success than those from the secular world.⁶⁵

In the workplace, studies show that though women who identify with hierarchy are often still employed, they are not aspiring in the same way.⁶⁶ “The leadership

⁶⁴ Colaner and Warner studied the influence of egalitarian and complementarian gender role attitudes on the career aspirations of college women. Colaner, C., and J. Warner, “The Effect of Egalitarian and Complementarian Gender Role Attitudes On Career Aspirations In Evangelical Female Undergraduate College Students,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 33, no. 3 (2005): 224-229.

⁶⁵ Sad commentary for the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), as the vast majority of CCCU schools are filled with evangelical women; presumably complementarian evangelical women.

⁶⁶ They found that 75.4% of women strongly agreed with the statement “The husband is the head of the home,” and 50.7% strongly agreed with the statement, “The husband has ultimate authority over the home.” They found that 201 out of 271 women believed that the wife was responsible to tend to the domestic chores of the home. 96.7% of their sample either agreed or strongly agreed with the notion of the “helper-wife.” Not even 10% of their sample agreed that women could hold equal positions in the church; 88.6% responded positively to the statement, “There will be limitations on what position I can hold in the church due to my gender.” Ibid., 224-229.

positions are still to be filled with men while women are to work the jobs that are lower on the hierarchy of responsibility and authority.” Women in conservative Christian denominations, which exercise greater discrimination against women, are more likely to be inhibited from choosing competitive, egoistic careers traditionally defined as masculine.⁶⁷ (Lack of career for women is another alternative that may be favored by conservative denominations.) Men in conservative denominations are more likely to choose such careers. Women and men in less sex-discriminating religions are more alike in choice of career.⁶⁸ A. Lewis Rhodes concludes,

“religion does seem to influence sex differences in occupational choice and disapproval of careers for married women. Males differ from females least in religions that afford women equality, and they differ most in those religions which do not ordain women.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Rhodes determined “masculine” occupations by asking subjects to choose only one from a list of 60 job titles in response to the question, “What is your probable future occupation?” The most “masculine” occupation is “carpenter.” 100% of the 22 persons who chose it were male, hence it was scored 100. The least “masculine” occupation is “clerical worker: secretary, stenographer, typist, or bookkeeper,” none of the 190 persons who choose it are male, hence it was scored zero. Egalitarians are likely to Rhodes research as exposing gender oppression that results from conservative evangelical doctrines. Complementarians, on the other hand, are likely to perceive this finding as a positive report, indicating that maleness and femaleness will be most distinctive and true to their God-intended tendencies if equality—a tool of “the world” is omitted from churches. Lewis A. Rhodes, “Effects of Religious Denomination on Sex Differences in Occupational Expectations,” *Sex Roles* 9, no. 1 (1983): 93-108.

⁶⁸ Ibid., Religions were categorized according to sex discrimination as indicated by the extent to which women may and do assume any role in the organizational structure of the denomination. The key test is whether women may be ordained. Three categories of sex discrimination were used: ‘No sex discrimination’ refers to full participation of women over a long period, with extensive ordination of women or its equivalent; ‘some sex discrimination’ means that ordination of women is recent and/or token, usually in specialized ministries or small congregations, ‘most sex discrimination’ means that women may not be ordained.

⁶⁹ Teresa Tinklin, et al, “Gender and attitudes to work and family roles: the views of young people at the millennium,” *Gender and Education* 17, No. 2 (2005): 129-142. Additionally, Rhodes found that the influence of religion was most apparent in the greater

The single most important predictor of the ways in which responsibilities were shared in the home was perceived job importance. If a married couple perceives the wife's work to be of equal or greater significance than her husband, there is a greater expectation or understanding that responsibilities of the home will be shared.⁷⁰

Ideas of gender not only impact decisions and goals, but also a subconscious understanding of self. Sara Snodgrass' study of "women's intuition" suggests that the absence of mutuality produces an intuitive instinct in the party with less power. This intuitive instinct guides the subordinate's responses to the superior.⁷¹ This increase of sensitivity is most likely a survival mechanism born in the lower ranks of a hierarchy.

sex differences observed for Adventists, Mormons, and Baptists; and in the small sex differences for the no-religion group. The need for an improved measure of sex discrimination within denominations was also revealed. For example, the United Methodist Church (with more than 20,000 pastors) had ordained 766 women, but no female had been appointed to a church with over 300 members, has served as pastor over a multiple staff, and has ever been a bishop. Whereas egalitarians may regard Rhodes findings as appalling, and providing rationale for their case against discriminating gender ideologies, complementarians are likely to view Rhodes findings as hopeful, that manhood and womanhood can remain distinctive even in occupation, if the evangelical church is committed to teaching "biblical manhood and womanhood."

⁷⁰J.M. Steil, and B.A. Turetsky, "Is Equal Better? The Relationship Between Marital Equality and Psychological Symptomatology." *Applied Social Psychology Annual* 7, ed. Stuart Oskamp (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1987), 73-97.

⁷¹ In an anonymous college chaplain's interaction with a female student, the student was expressing frustration with her boyfriend. "He is mean to me, laughs at me, and never does what I want to do." "Why do you stay with him?" the pastor asked. "I stay with my boyfriend because I understand him. I am the only one who knows how to take care of him. We understand each other." "Do you think he understands you as well as you understand him?" "Oh definitely not! He doesn't understand me at all." "Do you think he has more power than you do in this relationship?" "Yes. Definitely. But, I love him." This interaction parallels Snodgrass' theory that subordinacy may create a hyper-awareness of the needs and desires of the superior. In an effort to receive love and to grasp for power, the subordinate is likely to look for clues that may increase his/her personal power and/or affirmation of love.

When tested on both sexes, those in the subordinate role, regardless of sex, were more sensitive to the other person than those in the superior role. In her assessment of the study, Snodgrass hypothesized that it is not so important how the subordinate feels about the leader, for the subordinate's opinion of the leader seldom has repercussions. Additionally, she pointed out that the leaders were more expressive of their feelings than were the subordinates. Finally, she pointed out that in society, men most often assume the dominant role with women and women defer to men. Therefore, in light of these results, it is not surprising that women have become the more sensitive.⁷²

Gary Bredfeldt's study of Canadian Bible college students, which revealed that female Bible college students reported significantly lower self-esteem ratings than did females in the national study or males in the Bible college samples. Their felt sense of self-intelligence and competence was significantly lower than Bible college males or females in the national non-Bible-college, sample group.⁷³ Subsequently, Bredfeldt's study found that Bible college males expressed a significantly stronger sense of personal intelligence and competence than the males in the national population. It cannot be assumed that because these students were Bible college students that they were also

⁷² Sarah Snodgrass, "Women's Intuition: The Effect of Subordinate Role on Interpersonal Sensitivity," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 49, no. 1 (1985): 146-155.

⁷³ Approximately 60% of the Bible college males indicated that they view themselves as "above average" in intelligence compared to 46% in the national sample. Females on the other hand, indicated a sense of "above average" intelligence among 39% of the respondents. Similarly, 71% of Bible college males identified themselves as "above average" in their sense of personal competence compared to 57% of the national population group. 31% of females in the Bible college group viewed themselves as "above average" in personal competence. Gary J. Bredfeldt, "The Values and Attitudes of Incoming Bible College Students Compared with the Expectations of Faculty" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1991).

adherents to an ideology that embraced overt hierarchy over an ideology of gender mutuality. However, it must be considered that the predominant Christian ideology of gender includes hierarchy.⁷⁴

Summary

The purpose of this study is to understand what millennial evangelicals have heard from their evangelical communities about gender mutuality and how they are doctrinally responding. This chapter included a generational overview of the millennials, identifying them as a generation that has concern for justice, a generation for which gender messages have been infiltrated with themes of both equality and hierarchy, a generation in which females have become leaders and high achievers. This chapter also exposed that for evangelical Christians, discord remains about interpretation of biblical passages regarding gender. At the root of the discord is a key difference in value of the original context of biblical passages.

The social science research about gender mutuality included in this chapter, suggested that in the absence of gender mutuality, violence against women increased,⁷⁵ professional ambition and academic motivation decreased.⁷⁶ In the absence of gender mutuality, recovery from sexual abuse was complicated by self-blame and hierarchical

⁷⁴ Bredfeldt's study raises this question: In the absence of mutuality is there a correlation between low measures of self-esteem for females and high self-esteem for males? Ibid.

⁷⁵ Neal and Mangis, "Unwanted Sexual Experiences Among Christian College Women: Saying No on the Inside," 171-179.

⁷⁶ Colaner and Warner, "The Effect of Egalitarian and Complementarian Gender Role Attitudes on Career Aspirations in Evangelical Female Undergraduate College Students."

religious doctrine.⁷⁷ This chapter also revealed that in a study of relational power inequality, subordinates became hyperconscious of the desires of those in power over them as a sort of self-protection mechanism: a sensitivity that was not reciprocated, traditionally called, “women’s intuition.”⁷⁸ The United Nations Population Fund recognized that the absence of mutuality is a predictor of global poverty, increasing health risks, the size of the international population, increasing the sex slave industry and violence against women, and decreasing international education levels.⁷⁹

What can be concluded from this chapter is that the new generation of evangelicals has been subjected to a diversity of gender messages. There is ambiguity about how evangelical communities will respond when the millennials look to them for developmental guidance around gender identity, and even more ambiguity about how these millennials will respond to what they hear and see. The chapter that follows provides a biblical and theological framework for the ideology of gender mutuality.

⁷⁷ Imbens-Fransen, “The Impact of Religious Education on Incest Survivors,” 22-24.

⁷⁸ Snodgrass, “Women’s Intuition: The Effect of Subordinate Role on Interpersonal Sensitivity,” 146-155.

⁷⁹ “Joint Statement by Thoraya Ahmed Obaid and Louis on World Population Day 2005.” Equality Empowers (July 11, 2005.) United Nations Population Fund website. Available from <http://unfpa.org/news>. Accessed 23 September 2006.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER MUTUALITY

“Can I ask you a question?” he asked. The straight-A, senior Theology-major continued, “What do you do with the Scripture passages that say women should be silent? No one can ever answer that question for me.”

The following pages provide an introductory description of the biblical and theological ideas that create a framework for gender mutuality. This framework is not intended to be a defense for, or response to, any one verse or passage of Scripture. Rather, the endeavor of this biblical and theological framework is to articulate a conceptual theological perspective for one side of the evangelical gender conversation, drawn from the entirety and essence of the authoritative canon of Scripture, believed by evangelicals to be the Word of God. This theological framework for gender mutuality includes an evaluation of creation, the ministry of Jesus, and the life of the first-century church.

Creation

Dominion over Creation

Then God said, “Let us make *humankind* in our image, according to our likeness; and let *them* have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created *humankind* in his image, in the image of God he created them; *male and female* He created them. God blessed *them*, and God said to *them*, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have

dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”⁸⁰ (emphasis the author’s.)

A theology of mutuality begins with the creation texts. The first chapter of the Scriptures recording the relationship of God with humanity includes four distinctives central to gender mutuality. First, both men and women were created in God’s image (“Let us make humankind in our image.”)⁸¹ Second, together they were put in dominion over the earth (“Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”)⁸² Third, God blessed them both (“God blessed them...”⁸³ Finally God spoke to them both (“God said to them...”⁸⁴

God intended man and woman together to be caretakers of creation. God commanded them to do the same work. Both are exhorted to: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”⁸⁵ This shared mandate is an important starting point for gender mutuality, because there is not a hierarchy of task implied. One human is not assigned the role of “supervisor” and the

⁸⁰ Gen 1:26-28 RSV

⁸¹ Gen 1:26 RSV

⁸² Gen 1:26 RSV

⁸³ Gen 1:28 RSV

⁸⁴ Gen 1:28 RSV

⁸⁵ Gen 1: 28 RSV

other, the role of “subordinate.” Rather, they are both, unilaterally, told to be about the same mission.

The Creation of Woman

The second important conclusion for gender mutuality, is in the creation of Eve. The Hebrew word for “human” is *Adam* (*ah-dahm*).⁸⁶ It is not until God is about to create the woman that “Adam” is identified as having a sex.⁸⁷ This is significant because arguments against gender mutuality often say that the creation of Adam before Eve implies God’s desire for hierarchy in the husband-wife relationship. As the sex of the first human is referred to generically until the creation of the second human,⁸⁸ it should not be assumed that the creation of male before female indicates a superior-subordinate

⁸⁶ Gen 2:18 RSV, “Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” This is the first instance of gender identification. The Hebrew word, *adam*, which can be either “human” or the gender inclusive “man.” The Hebrew word *ishshah* is used for female.

⁸⁷ Bushnell says, “Read Gen 1L26-28 and with it, Gen 5:2. We find that at the first the name “Adam” belonged equally to male and female. God said: “Let US make man [or “Adam,”—it is the same word] in our likeness;” and the story proceeds,—“In the image of God made He Him, male and female made He Them.” Please note that in the second clause, man is spoken of as both singular and plural.” Catherine Bushnell, *God’s Word to Women*. (Mossville, IL: God’s Word to Women Publishers, 1923) 9.

⁸⁸ Groothuis says, “Some have suggested that before the woman was created, Adam was not a specifically male human, but was a sexually undifferentiated human. This idea seems to have some plausibility, given that the biblical text does not refer to Adam as male until after the woman is taken out of him. In Gen 1:26-27 and 5:1-2, we are told that God created Adam, that Adam was created in God’s image, and that Adam was created male and female. These summary statements telescope humanity’s two-stage creation, so that, whether existing in the form of a single being or as male and female separate beings, humanity is referred to simply as “Adam.” This suggests that before the woman was taken out of the man, Adam had in himself, somehow a capacity for both maleness and femaleness. Donald Joy sees a parallel here with fetal development, in which every fetus has the form of a female until the ninth week, after which time sexual differentiation begins to occur.” Rebecca Groothuis, *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997) 125.

relationship. Most likely this biblical account is meant to inform the reader's understanding of God's relation to humanity rather than to establish a hierarchy between male and female. (Gender mutuality would suggest that hierarchy is a consequence of the fall, and therefore hierarchy cannot exist pre-fall.) Even so, to make the assumption that female is inferior because she was created last (as the early church fathers did),⁸⁹ would make true the parallel assumption that because humans were created after the animals, humans are inferior to animals: a claim which is clearly ridiculous to both sides of the evangelical conversation.

The male pronoun is used to describe the human, In Genesis 2:18 (RSV) "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man (*adam*) should be alone; I will make him a

⁸⁹ David Scholer says, "Women were perceived by extant male writers to be responsible for most (all?) sin, and especially for sexual temptation and sin." David Scholer, "Women" in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. J.B. Green and Scot McKnight (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 880-887. The negative teachings of the church fathers about women have had a deeply felt (and often unremembered) impact on the Christian church for centuries. Chrysostom said, "Eve taught the man once, upset everything, and made him liable to disobedience. Therefore God subjected her, since she used her rule, or rather, her equality of honor, badly." Ruth Tucker and Walter Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing 1987), 125. Augustine said, "The woman together with her husband is the image of God, so that the whole substance is one image. But when she is assigned as a helpmate, a function that pertains to her alone, then she is not the image of God; but as far as the man is concerned, he is by himself alone the image of God, just as fully and completely as when he and the woman are joined together into one." Grootuis, *Good News for Women*, 126. Aquinas said, "As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of women comes from a defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influence, such as that of a south wind..." Alvera Mickelsen, *Women, Authority and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986) 21. Tertullian said, "God's sentence hangs sill over all your sex and His punishment weighs down upon you. You are the devil's gateway; you are she who first violated the forbidden tree and broke the law of God. It was you who coaxed your way around him whom the devil had not the force to attack. With what ease you shattered that image of God; man! Because of the death you merited, the Son of God had to die." Ibid., 21.

helper (*ezer*) fit for him.” This verse contains an important Hebrew word, the word used for “helper.” The word used is *ezer*,⁹⁰ a word used throughout the Old Testament to describe Yahweh and how Yahweh helps Israel.⁹¹ The 21st century American cultural understanding of the word “helper” is someone inferior who assists the superior with menial and rote tasks.⁹² The same author who wrote the word *ezer* used it in other contexts to describe Yahweh. The author knew the meaning of the word and chose to use it as a descriptor for both God and for woman. It is presumable that the meaning and associations of this word are what the author intended to communicate.

⁹⁰ “The creation stories in Genesis identify both men and women are created in God’s image (Gen 1:27), with no suggestion of subordination (Gen 5:2). The woman is designated “a helper as his [Adam’s] partner” (*ezer kenegdo*), that is, “complementary to him” (Gen 2:20). Curiously, the masculine form *ezer* appears in the text; why not *ezra*, the feminine noun?” Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 49.

⁹¹ For other uses of *ezer*, or helper, view Ps 33:20; 70:5; and 115:9.

⁹² Complementarian leaders Piper and Grudem say this of the word *ezer*, “It is true that God called our ‘helper,’ but the word itself says nothing about the kind of helper intended. The context must decide whether Eve is to ‘help’ as a strong person who aids a weaker one, or as one who assists a loving leader. The context makes it very unlikely that ‘helper’ should be read on the analogy of God’s help, because in Gen 2:19-20 Adam is caused to seek his ‘helper’ first among the animals. But the animals will not do, because they are not ‘fit for him.’ So God makes woman ‘from man.’ Now there is a being who is ‘fit for him,’ sharing his human nature, equal to him in God-like personhood. She is infinitely different from an animal, and God highlights her value to man by showing how no animal can fill her role. Yet in passing through ‘helpful’ animals to woman, God teaches us that the woman is man’s ‘helper’ in the sense of a loyal and suitable assistant in the life of the garden. The problem with the CBE (Christians for Biblical Equality) statement is the assumption that because a word has certain connotations in some places it must have them in every place.” John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 409.

Disobedience

This ideology (gender mutuality) regards it as significant that God holds Adam and Eve both responsible for their sin. Both Adam and Eve are questioned and both are sent out of the garden.⁹³ The consequences of Eve's disobedience result in pain in childbearing and a husband who will rule over her.⁹⁴ The consequences of Adam's disobedience are that the ground will be cursed, causing toil and sweat.⁹⁵ Gender mutuality suggests then, that gender roles were non-existent in the paradise of God's creation, and grew, destructively like weeds, out of broken relationship with God and one another: these are the gender roles with which men and women still struggle. God's indictment that Eve's "husband will rule over [her]"⁹⁶ is not a new proclamation of God's *desire* for the creation; rather it is a consequence of their sin. God's desire was for Adam

⁹³ The traditionalist viewpoint has throughout much of history placed responsibility for sin only on the woman, implying that men live in a sinful world because of the woman's decision. Likewise, the traditionalist viewpoint says that a husband was created with authority over his wife, and this is why God called Adam only after the disobedience in the Garden. Egalitarians would say that God called Adam because He gave the command to Adam only (before the creation of the second human). It is interesting that God sends both Adam and Eve out of the garden. If Adam was responsible for Eve, should he not have been sent out of the garden alone? Traditionalists have also mentioned that it was Eve who was tempted because she is the weaker and more vulnerable of the two, and that Adam's sin was more attributed to neglecting his responsibility to protect Eve from this blind-sighted temptation. Some complementarians would even say that as a result of these first sins, the supposed tendency of women is to lead the marriage relationship and the supposed tendency of men is toward laziness and indecision.

⁹⁴ Gen 3:16

⁹⁵ Gen 3:17-18

⁹⁶ Gen 3:16

and Eve to partner in dominion over the earth. Now, the sin of the couple has produced pain within creation. Consequences of their sin are pain in childbearing, unproductive land, bodies that will die, and struggle in their relationship with one another. A theology of mutuality suggests that the desire of God's people should be to live according to God's intentions for creation, not according to the consequences of sin.⁹⁷ Knowing that God desires creation that is sinless, partnership in dominion based on giftedness not prescribed roles, enjoying and obeying Him, these are the things the people of God are called to strive for, according to a theology of gender mutuality.

The Life and Death of Jesus

To a religious community who was noted as saying, "Even God himself avoided speaking to women," and

"Blessed be He who did not make me a Gentile; blessed be he who did not make me a woman; blessed be he who did not make me an uneducated man or a slave,"⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Complementarian logic would say that gender roles were God's creation intention and that sin is what makes it difficult to carry out God's intended roles in the relationships between man and woman. Additionally, complementarians would say that though men and women are called to the same overarching roles of multiplying the earth and subdoing it, that how they carry this out is different, which points to God's desire for both partnership and hierarchy.

⁹⁸ Daily prayer of Jewish men: Tosephta 7:16-18 on t. Ber. 13b or b. Menah. 43b. Spencer says of this prayer, "The prayer of thanksgiving is given not so much because Gentiles, women and slaves are inherently inferior but because they are not obliged to fulfill the commands to study the law. Rabbi Judah explains that a woman is 'under no obligation to keep the commandments' (t. Ber. 13b.) Consequently, an 'uneducated man' would be similar to a Gentile, woman, or slave." Aida Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985) 56.

Jesus models a new perspective of women for His church.⁹⁹ Jesus regards women in a way that was unusual for his culture, as is evidenced in His encounters with women, His teachings, and those who followed Him.

Encounters with Women

Traditionally, the Church has used the story of Mary and Martha to illustrate the importance of stillness in God's presence, by condemning Martha's busyness and frantic attention to household demands, and applauding Mary's attention to what is "more important." Biblical studies of gender will expose in this narrative something more than faith and works.

Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."¹⁰⁰

Within the Jewish culture, a woman's primary role was that of homemaker. She was exempt from rabbinic training and received no merit from learning the law. As Spencer says,

Jewish women were discouraged from having formal higher education in the law. They were not required to pursue religious training nor did they receive any merit in study. Furthermore, no one was required or encouraged to teach them. They were not admitted into Jewish schools. Even in the synagogue service they were not to 'study fully.' These exemptions were made for woman because she was to be primarily a homemaker and to be protected against unchastity. Consequently, women

⁹⁹ Leonard Swidler, *Women in Judaism: The Status of Women in Formative Judaism* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1976), 123-125.

¹⁰⁰ Lk 10:38-42 RSV

were often treated as persons who had little edification to share in conversation and who had little preparation to withstand the temptations of public life.¹⁰¹

In this narrative, Martha was responsible for her family, for her guests, for the upkeep of the home, and for the preparation of meals. Central to Jewish faith, was the value of hospitality. This was not seen as a social pleasantry, but as an important expression of obedience to Yahweh.¹⁰² When Jesus visited Martha's house, his disciples were with him, and the multitudes were not far off. Her sister Mary, who should be helping with preparations, is breaking a significant social norm as a Jewish woman, by sitting at the feet of a teacher in the way that male students would.¹⁰³ The situation is awkward. Careful attention to Jesus' words will expose a social paradox. "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has

¹⁰¹ Aida Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry*, (Hendrickson Publishers, 1985), 56-57.

¹⁰² The Mosaic Law stated, "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." Lev. 19:33 (RSV); likewise, Deut. 10:18, 19 (RSV) says, "He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner therefore; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt."

¹⁰³ Spencer says, "'To sit at someone's feet' in the United States conjures up memories of childhood, such as sitting around an adult or sitting at a campfire hearing stories. However, to sit at someone's feet for a first-century Jew (or other ancient person) would be an act to symbolize higher level formal education. Sitting at a rabbi's feet was a position typical of rabbinic students expressing respect to their rabbi. As Jose ben Joezer of Zeredah, who lived in *ca.* 160 BC, said, 'Let thy house be a meeting-house for the Sages and sit amid the dust of their feet and drink in their words with thirst (m. 'Abot 1:4). Since teachers sat on a raised place in order to teach (as Jesus did in Lk 4:20-21), students had to sit on mats on the floor to be in lower position than their teacher.'" Spencer, 59

chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from.”¹⁰⁴ Jesus does not tell Mary to return to the Jewish custom of hospitality, nor does he condemn her, a woman, for assuming the posture of a rabbinic student, by sitting at his feet. In essence, Jesus honors Mary as she breaks the social norm, by referring to this as a “choice.” Sitting at the feet of a rabbi has never before been a real choice for women, nor has leaving the holy practice of hospitality undone been a choice. Martha has a choice: as a woman, she can sit at the feet of Jesus, as the male rabbinic scholars and disciples could *or* she could serve him with hospitality in accordance with Mosaic law. This is not the only instance of Jesus redeeming the social value of women.

Many of the instances of Jesus’ healing of women are profound based on the social culture. When he healed the crippled woman, Jesus called her “a daughter of Abraham.”¹⁰⁵ In this Jewish culture, there was no greater compliment. In fact, very rarely is the term “son of Abraham used” because of the great honor it conveyed. Only once in Scripture does the term, “daughter of Abraham” appear, and it is initiated by Jesus. To be identified with Abraham indicated an unusual intimacy with God in this Hebrew culture. Presumably, never before had a woman been associated with Abraham.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Lk 10:38 RSV In some translations, Jesus’ response to Martha is “Mary has chosen what is better.” NIV The Greek adjective in Luke 10:38 is not in the comparative.

¹⁰⁵ Lk 13:18.

¹⁰⁶ April 15, 2003 lecture by David M. Scholer prepared for Fuller Theological Seminary. Content included in the course called, “Women, the Bible, and the Church” taught by David M. Scholer.

Another instance of Jesus disrupting social norms was his violation of the law recorded in Leviticus 15:19-31,¹⁰⁷ when he healed the bleeding woman¹⁰⁸. The law stated that she was ritually unclean and could not be touched. This was a very serious command. Jesus broke the command. He was less concerned with the purity law and more concerned with the woman. What is more, this woman was an interruption. She appeared as Jesus was following Jairus, a leader of the synagogue, to his home where Jairus' daughter was dying. This woman was ceremonially unclean and without value in the eyes of her culture as an unclean, and quite possibly a childless woman. Yet, Jesus places her as a priority above the holy man, the leader of the synagogue, and breaks a purity law right in front of him.

¹⁰⁷ “When a woman has a discharge of blood which is her regular discharge from her body, she shall be in her impurity for seven days, and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening. And everything upon which she lies during her impurity shall be unclean; everything also upon which she sits shall be unclean. And whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. And whoever touches anything upon which she sits shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening; whether it is the bed or anything upon which she sits, when he touches it he shall be unclean until the evening. And if any man lies with her, and her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean. If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of discharge she shall continue in uncleanness; as in the days of her impurity, she shall be unclean. Every bed on which she lies, all the days of her discharge, shall be to her as the be of her impurity; and everything on which she sits shall be unclean, as in the uncleanness of her impurity. And whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. But if she is cleansed of her discharge, she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. And on the eighth day she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tent of meeting. And the priest shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her before the Lord for her unclean discharge. “Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst.”

¹⁰⁸ Lk 8:42-47

Not only were women regarded as having lesser value than men in their culture but as descendents of Eve, women were often held responsible for the sin of humankind. This played out even in daily life. In instances of adultery, both the male and female could be punished, but frequently only the woman was punished.¹⁰⁹ As Jesus' encounter with the woman caught in adultery¹¹⁰ illustrates, women were held responsible for influencing men negatively.¹¹¹

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple; all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the law of Moses commanded us to stone such. What do you say about her?" This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." And once more he bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus looked up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again."¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Adultery is a different category from fornication. The seventh commandment forbids a married person from having sexual relations with one who is not his or her spouse, under the penalty of death (Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18). If a married man commits adultery with a married woman, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). In practice, adultery was a crime when committed by a betrothed or married woman, but not so when committed by the man. Sexual intercourse between a married man and an unmarried woman was not considered adultery. The purpose of the commandment was to protect the inheritance from falling into the hands of an illegitimate heir. King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 60.

¹¹⁰ Jn 8:1-11

¹¹¹ The earliest manuscripts and many other ancient witnesses do not include Jn 7:53-8:11.

¹¹² Jn 8:1-11 RSV

In a situation where Jesus could have used the law of Moses not only to shame this woman, but to end her life, Jesus chooses to teach both men and women about sin and grace. In this culture, where women were seen as among the least powerful, of lowest significance, and as somewhat dispensable, Jesus looked at her as a person of worth. He recognizes not just the sin in the woman, but also the sin of the men who are quick to reach for stones.¹¹³ In a culture where men were sinless and women were sinful, Jesus levels the playing field, showing mercy to the woman and expecting obedience of even the least socially valuable adulteress.¹¹⁴

Teaching About Women

Jesus' affirmation of women is not found in his interactions alone. He used them as positive examples in his teaching.¹¹⁵ For instance, in Luke 15 Jesus teaches the

¹¹³ In his teaching about adultery, in Mt 5:27-31 Jesus exhorted men, "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell." This statement posed harsh judgment on the *man* who lusted after a woman, turning the tables from the man as the victim of woman's sinful nature.

¹¹⁴ The story of the woman at the well in Jn 4:7-30 is also significant, as the primary reason that a man would have talked to a woman alone in public was as a sexual advance. The disciples do not comment on Jesus' interaction with this woman, because most likely it was too humiliating to discuss. Additionally, this story should be understood in context to the hostile relationship that existed between Samaritans and Jews. The reason that this woman would have been at the well in the heat of the day was out of shame. Also significant was that Jesus requested a drink from this woman. He did not have a bucket of his own to draw water from, so he waited for the woman to help him. This exchange is one that redeems the woman from the shames that society has placed on her, and restores her dignity.

¹¹⁵ Lk 18:1-8 records the story of a persistent widow who begged justice from a judge. This is another instance of Jesus' positive teaching about women.

Pharisees, using three stories, all illustrating the same concept. In the first story, he talks about a shepherd who has lost ninety-nine sheep and went after the one lost sheep.

(Notice the *male* analogy for God.) In the second story, Jesus told the Pharisees about a woman who had nine silver coins, but searched for the one lost coin until she found it.

(Notice the *female* analogy for God.) In the third story, Jesus talked about a man with two sons, who waits anxiously for the return of the prodigal. (Again, notice the *male* analogy for God.) How unusual it was at this time to use a woman as a positive teaching example. Even more controversial was to liken a woman to God.

In another instance, Jesus was teaching and a woman called out from the crowd, “Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!”¹¹⁶ This exaltation seems surprising to the twenty-first century reader. However, to a woman of the first century, this declaration was a high honor for a woman to receive or bestow.

Women played a prominent role in the context of family life, first as mother and second as wife. Indicative of the importance of these roles, both motherhood and marriage are common biblical metaphors describing the relationship between God and Israel (e.g., Hosea 1-3). The care, discipline, and training of young children were the responsibility of the mother. Childbearing conferred status on the woman, especially in times when the need to produce more children was critical, owing to war, famine, disease, and epidemics.¹¹⁷

The social climate afforded women status for motherhood, and even greater status for bearing sons. (This explains the grief that women felt when they were unable to conceive.) Jesus’ response once again challenges these social roles. “Blessed rather are

¹¹⁶ Lk 11:27 RSV

¹¹⁷ King and Stager, *Life In Biblical Israel*, 50

those who hear the word of God and obey it!”¹¹⁸ His response challenged her definition of a blessed woman. In essence, she said blessed is the woman who bore the Messiah. His response: greater are the women who follow me. It was a radical response: the value of women could be found in more than their ability to produce offspring.¹¹⁹ Jesus required and desired the obedience of both men and women: a contradiction to the Jewish faith in which women were considered exempt from many of the practices of faith.

Followers of Jesus

The Gospels identify both male and female followers of Jesus. Thorough search of the Gospels will identify nineteen male followers of Jesus: the Twelve, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Joseph Barsabbas (also known as Justus), Matthias, James the Just, Lazarus, and Zacchaeus. In addition, eight women are mentioned by name, as followers of Jesus: Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdelene, the other Mary, Mary and Martha of Bethany, Joanna, Susanna.¹²⁰ Approximately thirty percent of those who traveled with Jesus were women. These women not only were recorded as traveling with Jesus, they

¹¹⁸ Lk 11:28 RSV

¹¹⁹ David Scholer comments, “Two Gospel pericopes contain a similar saying of Jesus in which response and obedience to God’s word (discipleship) appears to be placed above motherhood, the traditional role for women (Mt 12:46-50 par. Mk 3:31-35 and Lk 8:19-21; Lk 11:27-28). In the common synoptic story Jesus says: ‘My mother and my brothers and sisters are those who hear the word (logos) of God and do it’ (Lk 8:21). In the incident reported only in Luke, Jesus says in response to a woman’s affirmation of his mother: ‘Blessed rather are the ones who hear and keep the word (logos) of God’ (Lk 11:28).” David Scholer, “Women” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. J.B. Green and Scot McKnight (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992) 880-887.

¹²⁰ Scripture references to these women: Mary the mother of Jesus (Lk 24:10); Mary Magdelene (Lk 24:10); the other Mary (Mt 27:61, Mt 28:1); Mary and Martha (Lk 10:38-42); Joanna (Lk 8:3, Lk 24:10); Suzanna (Lk 8:3). Notice also in Lk 24:10 the reference to “and the other women with them.”

were also mentioned at the cross, the tomb, and the resurrection. Some scholars presume that it was the female followers who financed Jesus' travels.¹²¹ The presence of Jesus' female followers illustrated a ground-breaking phenomenon: female followers of a Rabbi. The significance of the Twelve has little to do with their being male, but hinges on the fact that they were Jewish men, representing the twelve tribes of Israel. As Belleville points out,

Did not Jesus by his own maleness and in choosing twelve males as apostles ordain a patriarchal pattern of leadership for the church? This is a common way of thinking today, but it is one that possesses a fatal flaw. For Jesus did not merely choose twelve men but twelve Jewish men, and he himself was not merely a male, but a Jewish one. Yet no one argues that Jewish leadership is thereby ordained. Why then male leadership? This line of thinking also ignores the biblical symbolism of twelve Jewish males to represent the twelve tribes and their patriarchal heads. It is the twelve apostles who will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30). The new Jerusalem will have twelve gates, twelve angels, twelve foundations, and on them the names of the twelve apostles (Rev. 21:12,14.) It is important not to make a leap from the twelve apostles to male leadership in the church. The leap, instead, should be from twelve apostles to the church of Jesus Christ.¹²²

¹²¹ Women had money given to them by their fathers when they were married, which belonged solely to them. The intended purpose of this money was in the case of being widowed or divorced. In the case of Joanna was the wife of Herod's steward Chuza (Lk 8:3), which meant that she and her husband came from the court of Herod. A steward was an advisor or someone prominent in the court. This status indicates that Joanna came from the elite Roman society, based out of Tiberias, on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, not far from Capernaum, where Jesus based his ministry. Joanna's money more likely came from her Roman ties rather than from her father. It is probable that women financed Jesus' travels out of their own resources. Catherine C. Kroger and Mary J. Evans, eds. *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 454, 571.

¹²² Linda Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church: Three Crucial Questions*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 148.

The Death of Jesus

Two interesting changes happened with the death of Christ. When Jesus, the Sinless One, died He became the sacrificial offering that was the atonement for the sins of the people. As 1 Pet 2:24 (RSV) indicates, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.” The sins that were initially committed by Adam and Eve in the garden, and have continued over time, were absorbed by the death and resurrection of Jesus. So, why then, do some doctrines and practices of the Church imply that the sin of Eve, and the consequences thereof, still need to be paid for daily by womankind? Has not the death of Christ covered her sin also? As Gretchen Gaebelein Hull points out,

Whatever the Pauline references to Genesis 2 and 3 mean, those references cannot mean that women must remain permanently flawed, for that would mean that Christ’s shed blood is not powerful enough to cleanse them and make them a new creation. Those passages cannot mean that women are forever restricted in role because then Christ does not want to make them full children of God.¹²³

Gender mutuality ideology concludes from Christ’s death, it can be concluded that women professing the lordship of Christ are redeemed from their sin (as are all believers), and no longer left to live in captivity to that sin.

Second, the events following the resurrection of Christ contain additional implications.

¹²³ Alvera Mickelsen, *Women, Authority, and the Bible*. (Intervarsity Press, 1986), 25- 26.

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first... Then the disciples went back to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb, and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet.

...She turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

...Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher.)

...Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.¹²⁴

The first witness of the resurrection is a woman. Additionally, the first one to proclaim that news of the resurrection is also a woman. Also significant is that it was *to men* that Mary was sent to proclaim the news of the Risen Lord. It is also important to note that these men, who had been with Jesus, even in their doubt, believed this woman's testimony enough to follow her to the tomb.

Josephus, an aristocratic Jewish writer familiar with broader currents of the Greco-Roman world, regards the prohibition of women's testimony as part of God's law, based in the moral inferiority in their gender: 'Put not trust in a single witness, but let there be three or at the least two, whose evidence shall be accredited by their past lives. From women let no evidence be accepted, because of the levity and temerity of their sex; neither let slaves bear witness, because of the baseness of their soul.' Many Jewish writers thought of women as unstable and overly talkative.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Jn 20:1-4, 10, 11-12, 14, 16, 18 RSV

¹²⁵ Craig Keener, *Paul, Women, and Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul*, (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 163.

The life of Jesus validated women in a culturally shocking manner. He taught positively about them, restored their value, healed them, and invited women into the fellowship of his followers. Through His death, the sin of all who believe in his resurrection has been redeemed; that includes the sin of women. Jesus' resurrection was first proclaimed by women.

The Early Church

The life and teachings of the early church reflect Jesus' value of humankind. Today, many Christians are apprised of neither the genre of the letters to the Early Church, nor the culture to which these letters were written. Paul's letters to the Corinthians, Ephesians, and Galatians¹²⁶ are not without context, and necessitate an understanding of the audience and culture in order to gain a universal exposure of the truth. If contemporaries understood this background, what could be concluded is that Paul continued the movement that Jesus began, including his treatment of women. Paul allowed women to be devoted followers of Jesus and messengers of the Gospel, which in some ancient near-east cultures was a progressive shift from strict societal gender roles. In Gal 3:28, Paul says, "There is neither Jew or Greek, there is neither slave or free, there is neither male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."¹²⁷ This verse is connected to a larger context, in which, Paul explains the work of Christ's death that unites slave with master, Gentiles with Jews, and women with men. Gal 3:28 has become an important verse for champions of biblical equality because as Gordon Fee explains,

¹²⁶ These are the letters that are included most often in the evangelical gender debate.

¹²⁷ Gal 3:28 RSV

“Even though our text (Gal. 3:28) does not explicitly mention roles and structures, its new creation theological setting, calls these into question in a most profound way. There is no biblical culture (in the sociological sense) that belongs to all human societies. And to give continuing significance to a male-authority viewpoint for men and women whether at home or in the church, is to reject the new creation in favor of the norms of a fallen world. It is to give significance to being male that in the end usurps the work of the Spirit not only in the wife and her relationship to God but also in the church—the expression of the new order and new humanity that is already present, even while it is yet to be. Indeed, on the basis of this text and its place in the argument of Galatians—where socialized distinctions between people in their relationship to God have been overcome by Christ and the Spirit—one must argue that the new creation has brought in the time when the Spirit’s gifting (the Spirit who is responsible for ushering in the new order) should precede roles and structures, which are only a carryover from the old order that is passing away.”¹²⁸

Inclusion of Women in the Ministry of the Gospel

After the ascension of Jesus, the message of His life, death, and resurrection spread. This Gospel message was proclaimed frequently by women in the early church.¹²⁹ In Acts 1:13-15, the female followers of Jesus were among the disciples that were devoting themselves to prayer. Women were also significant in building house churches.¹³⁰ Inclusion of women in the life of religion was a tremendous change from the

¹²⁸ Pierce and Groothuis, *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 185.

¹²⁹ As Spencer explains, “When the noun *diakonos* refers to an individual male it is always translated ‘minister’ by the King James Version and usually translated ‘minister’ by other versions. Paul, Timothy, and Epaphras are always called ‘minister.’ Tychicus is called ‘minister’ at least once (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7). However, to some scholars, simply because Phoebe is a woman she cannot be called a ‘minister.’ ...For example, Kenneth Taylor describes Phoebe as a ‘dear Christian woman’ whereas Timothy is a ‘worthy pastor’ (1 Ti 4:6, The Living Bible).” Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 114.

¹³⁰ For examples of the partnership of males and females in the cause of the Gospel see: Acts 5:14; 8:3; 6:1; 12:12; 22:4. Also, women are instrumental in the growth and leadership of the churches at Joppa (Acts 9:32-43); Lystra (Acts 16:1); Philippi (Acts

traditional religious practices of the Judaism. Throughout the New Testament reference is made to women who prophesy.¹³¹ Paul also had many women that he referred to as co-workers: Lydia, Chloe, Nympha, Apphia, Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, Euodia, Syntyche, Priscilla, Phoebe, and Junia.¹³² The Ephesian church, as Paul addresses in his first letter to Timothy,¹³³ is faced with the issue of false teachers that are misleading the believing women of the church. Gordon Fee explains issues specific to the language,

16:11-40); Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-4); Berea (Acts 17:12); Athens (Acts 17:34); Corinth (Acts 18:2, 18, 26); Tyre (Acts 21:5); and Caesarea (Acts 21:8-9).

¹³¹ Examples: Acts 2:17-21; 21:8-9; 1 Cor 11:1-16

¹³² Lydia (Acts 16:14, 15), Chloe, Nympha, Apphia, Mary (Mt 27:61; Mt 28:1), Tryphena (Rom 16:12), Tryphosa (Rom 16:12), Persis (Rom 16:12), Euodia (Phil 4:2, 3), Syntyche (Phil 4:2, 3), Priscilla (Rom 16:3, Acts 18:2, Acts 18:18; 2 Ti 4:19), Phoebe (Rom 16:12), and Junia (Rom 16:7).

¹³³ In the Greco-Roman culture of the early church, pseudonymity was a reality in both Christian and pagan writings. This is the concept that an author would claim the pen name of another person, using the greater influence and authority that accompanied the pen name. In most cases of pseudonymity, the author was a follower or apprentice of the claimed name. The inconsistencies that are most concerning in 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are biographical, theological, and linguistic in nature. The pastoral epistles present possible biographical concern that the other Epistles parallel the book of Acts, creating a consistent record of Paul's journeys, imprisonments, and writings. The pastoral epistles on the other hand, receive no recognition in any of the epistles or in the Acts of the Apostles to validate the accuracy of these letters. Secondly, the major theological themes of the pastoral epistles differ in content. The pastoral epistles are concerned with church structure, which is disconcerting for scholars as the time line for the church organizational structure that is referred to in the pastoral letters does not parallel the structure that Paul's other letters and extrabiblical literature point to for the same time period. Finally, the biggest concern in the debate of authorship are the vocabulary differences. Paul's other letters semantically match one another. The pastoral epistles present new words, phrases, and sentence structure unique to the pastoral epistles alone. On this debate of authorship rest the questions of date and purpose for these pastoral epistles. If these epistles were not written by Paul, then they would have been written decades after his death. If the pastoral letters were not written by Paul, then the purpose for the writings is called into question. Without knowledge of the author, scholars can only theorize about the intention for such sensitive and pointed content, such as 1 Ti 2:15. Scholars have not reached a consensus on authorship to date, but trust the

It seems certain from 2:9-15; 5:11-15, and 2 Ti 3:6-7 that these straying elders have had considerable influence among some women, especially some younger widows, who according to 2 Ti 3:6-7 have opened their homes to these teachings, and according to 1 Ti 5:13 have themselves become propagators of the new teachings.' In 1 Ti 5:13, these women are described as busybodies going about from house to house (or perhaps house church to house church), 'talking foolishness and speaking of things they should not.' As a result, some have already 'turned away to follow Satan' (5:15). Fee notes that 'to talk foolishness' is a better translation than 'gossip' (NIV); for this word was 'used in contemporary philosophical texts to refer to 'foolishness' that is contrary to 'truth'.¹³⁴

Craig Keener observes that,

What is most significant about the wording of the passage...is that Paul does not assume that Timothy already knows this rule... Paul often reminds readers of traditions they should know by saying, 'You know,' or 'Do you not know?' or 'According to the traditions which I delivered to you.'

But in this case, there are no such indications that Paul is merely reminding Timothy of an established rule about which Timothy would already have known. Moreover, there are no parallel texts in the New Testament to support the view that New Testament churches normally denied women teaching authority.¹³⁵

canonization of the epistles. Even if the pastoral epistles were authored by another, the author most likely would have been a follower of Paul, and someone who could write confidently in his name. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 605.

¹³⁴ Gordon D. Fee, "*Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics*" (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 52-65.

¹³⁵ As Spencer explains, "Paul does not command the women not to teach. He employs the present active indicative for 'allow.' The present tense in Greek principally denotes continuous present action. It can refer to present necessity and obligation and to potential action. Greek has its own imperative mood which is not here employed. Commands can also be phrased in the aorist or the future indicative. Neither of these tenses is here used. Nor does Paul use the perfect tense to denote an action in the past which has changed the state of affairs. Paul is saying: 'I am not presently allowing a woman to teach.' Somehow the usual English translation 'I do not permit' appears to readers to be the same or more forceful than 'let a woman learn.' However, in reality,

‘Since this passage is related so closely to the situation Timothy was confronting in Ephesus, we should not use it in the absence of other texts to prove that Paul meant it universally.’¹³⁶

The Corinthian church was faced with a myriad of problems, among which were marital issues. In this culture for Paul to proclaim that “the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does” (I Corinthians 7:4, RSV), would have been very controversial. It was held that a husband had authority over his wife’s body, but a wife over her husband? 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 outlines the behavior that a woman should adhere to in the church, much of which is committed to the appearance of a woman. Paul gives instruction to the women to live within the cultural parameters,¹³⁷ so as to respect its people in the name of Christ.

Other problems confronting the Corinthian church were liberty and responsibility, the denial of Resurrection doctrine, spiritual gifts and church order. As much was at stake for the sake of the Gospel, Paul addressed discussions of sexuality and the proper behavior for women located in this Greek-cultured church, instructing these believers in

‘let her learn’ is the command; ‘I do not allow’ is the present action.” Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 85.

¹³⁶ Groothuis, *Good News for Women*, 212-213.

¹³⁷ Keener says, “Whatever particular nuances Paul may have wished to call to his readers’ minds, he uses a wordplay to facilitate his point: the woman who brings dishonor on her head is bringing dishonor upon her husband, and thus upon the Christian family. That is Paul’s point in this context, not that her display of independence in removing the culturally significant head covering would bring reproach on any husband in the culture.” Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 1992. Bushnell says, “If St. Paul veiled women he did not silence women, for, according to this interpretation he ordered them to veil only when prophesying or praying, not at other times; so that, if they were silenced they were unveiled, so far as Scripture teaches. Yet the general idea and teaching is that Paul both veiled and silenced women.” Bushnell, *God’s Word to Women*, 84.

how to enact sensitively discipleship and witness to enact sensitively discipleship and witness in the midst of cultural challenges.¹³⁸

A New Perspective of Marriage

In the centuries before Paul gave instructions to the new Israel, through the letter to the church at Corinth, there was a standard for holy marriage. The evangelical church in America has made headship¹³⁹ the central point for understanding Christian marriage. But, if the canon did not include Acts through Revelation, the Scriptural essence of holy marriage would not differ.

The position of gender mutuality insists that when God created Adam and Eve, He intended for mutuality in marriage. The result of the fall, was an unhealthy power struggle. After centuries of ingrained hierarchical understanding of marriage, Jesus challenged the cultural norms. He made a point of addressing issues of marital injustice,

¹³⁸ “In Philo’s description of pleasure coming in the guise of a prostitute, he describes such a woman as having her hair in curious and elaborate plaits, her eyes with pencil lines, her eyebrows smothered with paint, her costly raiment embroidered lavishly with flowers, and with bracelets and necklaces of gold and jewels hanging around her.” In a study of the Greek word, *polutehlhs*, used in 1 Ti 2:9, suggests some of the realities that Paul was faced with in the Greek culture. The word, *polutehlhs*, means “very costly, very expensive, reveals that “the best garments could cost as much as seven thousand denarii. For those of inferior quality for commoners and slaves the cost would be between eight hundred and five hundred denarii (the average wage of the working man was one denarius a day.)” Cleon L. Rogers, Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1998), 490. It seems that Paul’s repeated interest in the headship of women may have more to do with their Christian witness in their respective cultures than any of the other explanations that are offered.

¹³⁹ A term coined from the Greek word *kephale* used in I Cor 11:3 (RSV), “But I want you to understand that the *head* of every man is Christ, the *head* of every woman is her husband, and the *head* of Christ is God” Eph 1:22 (RSV), “and he has put all things under his feet and made him the *head* over all things for the church,” and Eph 5:23 (RSV), “For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.”

such as divorce, adultery, the lack of social value for women outside of motherhood and household management.¹⁴⁰ He did not make marriage the main platform for his years of ministry. He never mentioned “headship.” However, He was intentional about establishing a kingdom-culture of servanthood, self-denial, love, sacrifice, and stewardship.¹⁴¹

With these five words alone, a concept of holy marriage can be drawn. The last shall be first, the first shall be last.¹⁴² The greatest is the least.¹⁴³ Love your enemies.¹⁴⁴ Forgive.¹⁴⁵ The essence of the Christian life and of marriage (because it is a smaller entity within the Christian life) is sacrifice. There is not a sex distinction here between male or female, husband or wife. Even when the injustice comes seventy times seven, Jesus’ teachings suggest that still forgiveness is required.¹⁴⁶

If the essence of Jesus’ message is applicable to both husband and wife, then Paul’s message must be consistent with and also support Jesus’ teachings. Whether

¹⁴⁰ See the section of this biblical and theological framework for gender mutuality entitled, “The Life and Death of Jesus.”

¹⁴¹ Evangelicals on both sides of the gender debate would agree that these were themes in Jesus’ ministry. There may be debate about which themes were the most important in Jesus’ ministry. Few would debate, however, that these were, in fact, central ideas.

¹⁴² Mt 19:30, 20:16

¹⁴³ Mt 18:4

¹⁴⁴ Mt 5:43

¹⁴⁵ Mk 11:26

¹⁴⁶ Mt 18:21,22

Paul's term *kephale* means 'fountainhead', 'authority',¹⁴⁷ 'life source', or 'human head', (as scholars continue to debate robustly),¹⁴⁸ either way a husband is still, if contextualized in the broader view of Scripture, asked to see his wife as 'better than himself' and a wife is to 'lay down her life' for her husband. Scripture seems to be clear on this: it is unscriptural to view oneself as more important than another person.¹⁴⁹

In the same letter that Paul writes the debatable word '*kephale*' as a metaphor for the relationship between husband and wife (Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth), he also writes the passage known as the love chapter, which is not directed specifically toward one sex more than the other. He says that love "protects," a character trait that is

¹⁴⁷ "Although one scholar [Wayne Grudem] published an essay surveying 2336 examples of *kephale* in Greek literature arguing that they prove 'authority' as the meaning, two facts remain critical. First, the analysis of many specific crucial ancient Greek texts remains debatable... Second, there are over 10,000 instances of *kephale* in Greek literature still unexamined." Scholer, "Male Headship," 7. Gilbert Bilezikian in his work, *Beyond Sex Roles*, has included an appendix called, "A Critical Examination of Wayne Grudem's Treatment of *Kephale* in Ancient Greek Texts." Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says About a Woman's Place in Church and Family* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1985) 215.

¹⁴⁸ Scholer explains, "New Testament scholars have been in debate for some time over the precise metaphorical meaning of the Greek word "head" (*kephale*). There are two major opposing viewpoints on the definition of "head." Those who oppose the equal partnership of men and women in ministry almost uniformly argue that "head" means "authority" and that therefore, the New Testament teaches that men are to have authority over women and that women ought to be subordinate to men in order to conform to the structure of reality intended by God. Many, but not all, who support the equal partnership of women and men in ministry have argued that "head" means "source" or "origin" and that, therefore, the New Testament texts refer only to the derivation of woman from man in the Genesis 2 narrative of creation and means simply nothing about hierarchy and submission in ministry. In my judgment, the debate over the Greek word *kephale* is unresolved." Scholer, "Male Headship" 7.

¹⁴⁹ Egalitarians and complementarians will both be in agreement with this. Complementarians however are likely to suggest that though a husband should not view himself as more important than his wife, he is to act as a servant leader for her.

more often socialized as masculine.¹⁵⁰ He says that love “trusts,” a character trait that is more often socialized as feminine.¹⁵¹ And, it should be noted that this list of love descriptors is consistent with Jesus’ teachings about Christ followership. Both Paul and Jesus seem less concerned with enforcing sociological norms for masculinity and femininity and more concerned with training selfless servants.

If the essence of holy relationships is embraced, a wife will protect her husband,¹⁵² a husband will trust his wife, a wife will lay down her life for her husband, and a husband will be last. Call it headship; call it mutual submission,¹⁵³ the essence of

¹⁵⁰ I Cor 13:7

¹⁵¹ I Cor 13:7

¹⁵² Bushnell points out, “In the earliest ages of human history it was customary for the husband either to go and live under the roof of his wife’s parents, or to make frequent visits to her there,—she never leaving the protection of her parents. The parents were the “natural protectors” of their married daughters,—not the husband who not infrequently has proved unworthy of his trust. The early custom was to eye him with a certain amount of wholesome suspicion, as an alien, until he had actually demonstrated his ability to care for a wife in a proper manner.” Bushnell, *God’s Word to Women*, 19.

¹⁵³ Rebecca Groothuis states, “The Greek word translated ‘submit’ refers to being put or ordered, or to ordering oneself, under another. Whenever it is exhorted of wives—or of Christians in general—it is in the sense of submitting oneself voluntarily, rather than being put forcibly under submission. The general meaning is of self-surrender, of a ‘readiness to renounce one’s own will for the sake of others...and to give precedence over others.’ Christian submission is presented in the New Testament as transforming one’s ‘place’ in the social order from a situation of onerous obligation and slavish obedience to an expression of one’s devotion and ultimate submission to Christ, within a context of reciprocal submission among all believers. ...The call to mutual, reciprocal submission in Eph 5:21 establishes the framework for the instructions to wives and husbands that follow. Verses 21 and 22 should be considered part of the same thought, for the verb ‘submit’ in verse 22 is not in the Greek text but is borrowed from 21. Wives, therefore, are to submit to their husbands in the same way that all believers are to submit to one another. This text...is presenting the submission of wives as one application of the basic principle of mutual submission that is to be applied by all believers within the context of the body of Christ. The admonitions to wives to submit and husbands to love are balanced in this passage by commands to all believers to love and submit to one

Christian marriage is servanthood, not power. When one spouse is called to servanthood and the other is called to lordship, the ideology of gender mutuality suggests that Christian doctrine has mistaught the essence of Christian marriage.¹⁵⁴

Conclusion

This biblical and theological framework draws from three distinct parts of Scripture: creation, the ministry of Jesus, and the life of the first-century church. From creation, gender mutuality emphasizes God's desire for male-female relationships and humanity's relationship with God. Instead of relationship with God, the fall-of-humanity

another. ...Because it is clear that this passage [Eph 5:21] is teaching mutual submission in some sense, traditionalists often try to affirm the coexistence of hierarchy and mutual submission within marriage. The wife's submission is defined as obedience, while the husband's submission is defined as a paternalistic concern to determine what is best for the person in his charge. ...The fact that the Bible never tells husbands to rule, take authority over, command, or otherwise provide direction and decisions for their wives seems far more significant than that husbands are not specifically told to 'submit.'" Groothuis, *Good News for Women*, 163-165.

¹⁵⁴ Gender mutuality would say that the church has been better at teaching wives how to be servants in their marriages, than it has been at teaching husbands. This is a generalization, of course, but with the abundance of abuse and oppression in marriage, it seems that somehow many men have been led to believe that holy marriage is defined differently for men and for women, and that somehow it connotes strong will, omniscience, lack of weakness, and the image of power. Gender mutuality would also identify that as this is an international problem shows both the holistic cost of the fall and also the failure on the part of the Church. The Church is to teach servanthood, care for the oppressed, rescue of the weak and mistreated, and certainly not, act as the empowerer of the oppressor. Additionally, when the church has presented marriage in a single-servant light, many women have interpreted (or been trained to believe) that Scripture insists that their voice should not be heard. This presents multiple problems, starting with unfaithful stewardship of the gifts that God has given her. Her deliberate withholding of information will also limit her husband's ability to care for the people and responsibilities in his life. The servanthood model of marriage insists that both husband and wife make effort to empathetically listen to the voice of the other, and that both are faithful to be honest communicators of the truth. Condescending, abusing, oppressing, disrespecting, silencing, patronizing, and/or manipulating another person are not traits of holiness inside, or outside, of the marriage relationship.

texts indicate that a result of sin is that men will seek to lord power over their wives, and that wives will seek mutuality in relationship with their husbands.

From the life and teachings of Jesus, gender mutuality draws that as Jesus redeems fallen humanity with his death and resurrection, men and women are freed from the implications of the Fall. Women are invited to become full disciples: learners, followers, and proclaimers of Jesus Christ. In the early church, Paul proclaimed the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, declaring that Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female are united in Christ.

This chapter skims the surface of the biblical and theological framework for gender mutuality. As this chapter fails to give detailed discussion of hermeneutics, ancient languages, literary style, cultural backdrop, unresolved scholarly questions, and implications for present day ecclesiastical settings, the following chapter acts as a referral to books and authors that provide more comprehensive discussion of related topics. Additionally the following chapter provides resources for a sociological overview of the present day culture of millennials and the culture of gender in America.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Her eyes were beaming with excitement. In a fast-paced, delighted whisper, she updated me on interactions with the man of her affections. She had figured out his class schedule, and had intentionally worn one of her most lovely outfits, and was reading her book on the sunny bench outside of the academic building that he would soon be exiting. With only partial attention fixed on her book, she watched for him to come out of the brick building. “Hello,” he said to her. “Hello,” she responded. And that was the end of their conversation. “Why didn’t you ask him to sit down?” I said to this college woman. “I can’t do that!” she emphatically retorted. “He’s supposed to pursue me! Not the other way around!” “You don’t think you were pursuing him by sitting outside his class?” I asked. “Well, no. I was just being available to him.”

This chapter provides an overview of books that touch the issue of millennial evangelicals’ responses to gender mutuality. The chapter commences with an introduction to ideas that have been significant in the evangelical discussion of gender. Then, the chapter provides important books written about the millennial generation. Finally, the chapter closes with sociological literature regarding gender in American culture.

Gender Mutuality

Among the earliest contributions to biblical equality literature is Katherine Bushnell’s, *God’s Word to Women*,¹⁵⁵ published in 1923. Her work is important because

¹⁵⁵ Katherine Bushnell, *God’s Word to Women* (Mossville, IL: God’s Word to Women Publishing Company, 1923.)

it preceded the gender equality conversation that hit evangelicalism in the mid-1900s. One of the arguments against biblical equality is that it is a response to American culture's liberation of women, rather than a reaction to Scripture. For this reason, it is helpful to read Bushnell's research, which includes all the major biblical equality arguments that are relevant today, written over eighty years earlier.

The Pauline Epistles of the New Testament have often been among the most debated biblical texts concerning gender. One of the more significant voices to rise out of the last fifty years of evangelical debate is that of Catherine Kroeger, classical scholar and founding member of Christians for Biblical Equality. Kroeger's academic specialization is the study of the ancient Greek world. Along with her pastor husband, Richard Kroeger, Catherine Kroger in their work *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking I Timothy 2:11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*¹⁵⁶ exposed translation errors and cultural dynamics which shed new light on Paul's Ephesus. They argue, "Those who maintain that the Bible contains a fundamentally consistent and coherent message must deal with the apparent discrepancies between our target passage and the rest of Scripture."¹⁵⁷ Through word study they exegete the meaning of the Greek word *authentein*, understood by many American evangelicals to mean "authority" or "leadership," and identify its singular Scriptural appearance here, translated most accurately to mean "to usurp authority" or "to dominate," sometimes carrying with it other implications such as

¹⁵⁶ Catherine Clark Kroeger and Richard Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking I Timothy 2:11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992.)

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 17.

“killing someone” or “laying claim to property.” This term does not carry with it any connotation of leadership.

Another important work authored by Aida Spencer, a notable voice in the biblical equality conversation, is *Beyond the Curse: Women Called To Ministry*.¹⁵⁸ Spencer explains that the phrase, “A woman should learn in silence and full submission,” taken from 1 Ti 2:11, was not meant to emphasize that a woman was to be silent, but that women at Ephesus were to learn. Ephesus was a city challenged by false teaching and here Paul is exhorting the women to learn in the rabbinic tradition as the men would have: “in silence and full submission,” so the women would not fall prey to false teaching out of ignorance. Spencer also refutes complementarian arguments which say that God intended Adam to rule over Eve. Spencer would say that God never gave specific directive for one human to rule over the other, though He did instruct Adam and Eve to fill and subdue the earth together.¹⁵⁹

Linda Belleville’s work is helpful because she addresses the topic of gender mutuality in topical study in her work, *Women Leaders and the Church: Three Crucial Questions*.¹⁶⁰ The questions she engages are central to the gender equality debate: “In Which Ministries Can Women Be Involved?”, “What Roles Can Women Play in Society?” and “Can Women Hold Positions of Authority?”. She summarizes her study in these words:

¹⁵⁸ Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*.

¹⁵⁹ Gen 1:28

¹⁶⁰ Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church: Three Crucial Questions*.

Three biblical truths can be gleaned from our study. The first truth is that God gifts women in exactly the same ways he gifts men. Nowhere in the New Testament are gifts restricted to a particular gender. The second truth is that God intended the male-female relationship to be equal and mutual. The third truth is that in the church “there is not... male and female.” Church roles in the New Testament are nowhere defined on the basis of gender. This is because the concept of the local church is an organic one, not a hierarchical one.¹⁶¹

In his work *Paul, Women and Wives; Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul*,¹⁶² Craig Keener, author of the *InterVarsity Press New Testament Commentary*, has done an exhaustive study of the Pauline passages. In his work, he represents ancient and current contributions to the gender equality debate. His book is well-organized, designating each chapter for analysis of a different biblical passage regarding gender.

In each of these works there is a basic introduction to hermeneutics. William Webb's publication, *Slaves, Women, and Homosexuals*,¹⁶³ commits not one chapter to discussion of hermeneutics, but the entire work. Webb invites readers to look at Scripture with a *redemptive movement hermeneutic*. By this he means that Scripture must be looked at in its original context, and following the observation of the cultural dynamics being addressed in a biblical text, the modern day reader must then ask, “In what direction is Scripture progressing?” This form of hermeneutic supposes that the

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 181.

¹⁶² Keener, *Paul, Women, and Wives*.

¹⁶³ William Webb, *Slaves, Women, and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.)

biblical exhortation is not the end goal for Christians, but a starting place for carrying out the values of Scripture in a modern day culture. The term *redemptive movement hermeneutic* is based on the idea that Scripture is living and active, and that when concepts are applied to early contexts, and then reapplied to today, Scripture is powerful and redemptive, moving throughout time with the same swiftness. Readers are given examples of the redemptive movement hermeneutic with three biblical examples: slavery texts, women texts, and homosexual texts.

Gilbert Bilezikian's *Community 101*¹⁶⁴ is important because he addresses the idea that power relationships have been misguided widely in evangelical culture. Though his book is about community, he includes male-female relationships. He reminds readers that in Christ there is no male or female. Bilezikian proposes that the evangelical church in America has misunderstood biblical leadership, even with regard to relationships of pastor to congregation. Whereas in America, a pastor may be seen as a kind of celebrity in the congregation, Scripture portrays an upside-down hierarchy, with the congregation engaged in the life and leadership of the church, being served by leaders rather than directed by leaders.

One of the key contributions of theologian Sarah Sumner's work is her attention to metaphor. In Sarah Sumner's work, *Men and Women in the Church*,¹⁶⁵ she argues that "Biblical metaphors should never be mistaken for anything other than metaphors; they

¹⁶⁴ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as a Community of Oneness*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997.)

¹⁶⁵ Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership* (InterVarsity Press, 2003), 117.

should always be left intact. Metaphors aren't meant to be taken literally, but neither are they meant to be ignored."¹⁶⁶ In her work, one of the metaphors that Sumner addresses is the metaphor of "head" in the Scripture passage "husband is the head of wife."¹⁶⁷

Now consider what happens when the biblical metaphors are converted into more manageable definitions. When head is defined as "leader" and body is defined as "helper," the biblical mystery is lost. What is mysterious about a leader being coupled with his helper? Not very much. Nor is it particularly inspiring. But it is altogether breathtaking to see the biblical picture of body and head joined mysteriously as one. The picture of "one flesh" communicates volumes of theology. It indicates immediately the organic unity that bonds a husband and wife. ...It is not so disturbing to imagine a leader breaking up with his assistant. But it is utterly disconcerting to imagine a body being amputated physically from its head. It's a horrible, bloody picture—a decapitation—too repulsive to imagine graphically. A body belongs to its head and head belongs to its body.¹⁶⁸

Also important to the evangelical conversation is that her work seeks to honor the scholarship of the complementarian and egalitarian camps, aiming to recognize the value and errors in both perspectives. In *Men and Women in the Church*, Sumner exposes the tension between two evangelical groups: "Christians for Biblical Equality" and "the Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood."

These two organizations are the leaders for the opposing sides of the gender equality debate within the evangelical community. Out of each of these organizations has come an anthology of articles. The anthology associated with the contributors to

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 117.

¹⁶⁷ Eph 5:23

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 167.

Christians for Biblical Equality is called *Discovering Biblical Equality*,¹⁶⁹ edited by Ronald Pierce and Rebecca Groothuis, which was a response to the anthology associated with the contributors to the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood called *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*,¹⁷⁰ edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. Piper and Grudem's work is the primary resource for the complementarian perspective. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* argues ardently for hierarchy as God's intention for man and woman. A sample inclusion from their compilation is included here:

It is simply impossible that from time to time a woman not be put in a position of influencing or guiding men. For example, a housewife in her backyard may be asked by a man how to get to the freeway. At that point she is giving a kind of leadership. She has superior knowledge that the man needs and he submits himself to her guidance. But we all know that there is a way for that housewife to direct the man that neither of them feels their mature femininity or masculinity compromised. ...To the degree that a woman's influence over man is personal and directive it will generally offend a man's good, God-given sense of responsibility and leadership, and thus controvert God's created order. A woman may design the traffic pattern of a city's streets and thus exert a kind of influence over all male drivers. But this influence will be non-personal and therefore not necessarily an offense against God's order. Similarly, the drawings and specifications of a woman architect may guide the behavior of contractors and laborers, but it may be so non-personal that the feminine-masculine dynamic of the relationship is negligible. ...The God-given sense of responsibility for leadership in a mature man will not generally allow him to flourish long under personal, directive leadership of a female superior.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Ronald Pierce and Rebecca Groothuis, eds. *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005.)

¹⁷⁰ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991.)

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

A more concise and reader-friendly parallel guide to the two opposing arguments of gender equality in the Church is called, *Two Views on Women in Ministry*,¹⁷² edited by James Beck (representing the egalitarian perspective), Craig Blomberg (representing the complementarian perspective), and senior editor Stan Gundry.

In the evangelical gender debate very little attention is given to the life and teachings of Jesus. For this reason, Alice Mathews' work, *A Woman God Can Lead*,¹⁷³ is particularly significant. Mathews illuminates the cultural backdrop for the interactions that Jesus had with women in the Gospels. When the culture of Jewish women in the Ancient Near East is understood, elements of their servitude, powerlessness, and shameful position in the culture incite Jesus' unique displays of gentleness, honor, and advocacy. Mathews' book is not written as a contribution to scholarly debate. It is written specifically for women seeking to emulate Jesus' life and teachings. Her scholarship and unique approach to gender in Scripture make her work particularly helpful.

Millennial Evangelicals

*Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*¹⁷⁴ was published in 2000, when Generation Xers were still being talked about in popular culture. In 2000, the oldest of the millennials were eighteen years old and just finishing high school. At the time of the

¹⁷² James Beck, Craig Blomberg, and Stan Gundry, eds., *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001.)

¹⁷³ Alice Palmer Mathews, *A Woman God Can Lead*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House Publishers, 1998.)

¹⁷⁴ Howe and Strauss, *Millennials Rising*, 6.

book release, no one even knew what to call this generation,¹⁷⁵ let alone how to describe them. Would this new generation be like the Generation Xers who were a sullen, abandoned, latchkey-backlash generation? Strauss and Howe's forecast of the upbeat, authority-respecting, socially-engaged, academically serious millennial-generation came as great and almost unbelievable news, bringing hopefulness and intrigue to educators, pastors and parents.

Strauss and Howe's second book, *Millennials Go To College*,¹⁷⁶ was a follow-up to *Millennials Rising*,¹⁷⁷ but written with implications and practical recommendations for university personnel who would need to adjust their approach to student development according to the different needs and desires of the incoming generation of students and families. They describe seven core traits of millennials in their book, *Millennials Go To College*.¹⁷⁸

Richard Kadison, Chief of Mental Health Services at Harvard University, and Theresa Foy DiGeronimo, author of more than thirty five books in the fields of education

¹⁷⁵ In an abc.com poll, the top ten suggested names were as follows: Millennials, "Don't Label Us," Generation Y (or Why?), Generation Tech, Generation Next, Generation.com, Generation 2000, Echo Boom, Boomer Babies, and Generation XX. (Howe and Strauss 2000)

¹⁷⁶ Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Go To College*. Strategies for a New Generation on Campus: Recruiting and Admissions, Campus Life, and the Classroom, (Great Falls, VA: Life Course Associates, 2003.)

¹⁷⁷ Howe and Strauss, *Millennials Rising*, 6.

¹⁷⁸ The seven core traits that Howe and Strauss identify in the millennials are: special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, conventional, pressured, and achieving.

and parenting, have co-authored *College of the Overwhelmed*.¹⁷⁹ Their work is important because it identifies another growing trend among the college-bound millennials, in what they call the campus mental health crisis. Whereas previous generations dared not expose abnormal emotional or psychological conditions, the millennial generation is comfortable with the resources available to them in psychological counseling. Kadison and DiGeronimo address the underlying causes of the campus mental health crisis (including academic, extracurricular, parental, racial, and cultural pressure and competition, as well as financial worries and social fears) and implications for college campuses of this growing desire for mental health care in the emerging generation.¹⁸⁰

Chap Clark's book *Hurt*,¹⁸¹ is significant because unlike Howe and Strauss' positive outlook on the millennials or Kadison and DiGeronimo's concern for present day college students, he finds a balanced middle ground of hopefulness and concern and

¹⁷⁹ Richard Kadison and Theresa Foy DiGeronimo, *College of the Overwhelmed: The Campus Mental Health Crisis and What To Do About It* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2004.)

¹⁸⁰ Kadison and DiGeronimo report, "According to the 2001 National survey of Counseling Center Directors, 85 percent of center directors reported an increase in "severe" psychological problems over the last five years. A recent study at Kansas State University found that between 1989 and 2001, the number of students with documented depression doubled, and the proportion of students taking psychiatric medications rose from 10 to 25 percent. The number of suicidal students tripled. This is the reality of today's college experience." Kadison and DiGeronimo warn parents, "If your son or daughter is in college, the chances are almost one in two that he or she will become depressed to the point of being unable to function; one in two that he or she will have regular episodes of binge drinking (with the resulting significant risk of dangerous consequences such as sexual assault and car accidents); and one in ten that he or she will seriously consider suicide." *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁸¹ Clark, *Hurt*.

places them in an evangelical framework for care. Clark's book has become widely utilized by evangelical youth ministers and seminaries.

Another helpful resource for understanding young adults within the context of evangelicals is Robert Webber's *The Younger Evangelicals*¹⁸² in which he provides generational comparisons of Christian tradition, explaining the spiritual values that accompany this new generation of evangelicals.

The Culture of Gender

In a historical survey of the adolescent female body, Joan Brumberg¹⁸³ argues convincingly that the constricting Victorian era of corsets was not nearly so oppressive for women as today's culture of the female body. Brumberg's book is called *The Body Project* because she discusses the many projects that young women must undertake to make their bodies acceptable for American culture. Among these projects she lists the sanitization of menstruation, hairlessness, changing fads of body weight and proportionment, and a disturbing abundance of various other body projects. Brumberg's work is powerful because she analyzes numerous body projects and tracks them over the years, and what results is the physical and emotional pressure placed on adolescent females by the American culture.

¹⁸² Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals*.

¹⁸³ Brumberg, *The Body Project*.

Whereas Brumberg addresses body issues from a historical viewpoint, Lillian Calles Barger, author of *Eve's Revenge: Women and a Spirituality of the Body*,¹⁸⁴ addresses them from an evangelical perspective. She opens with a reflection,

“I was accosted by an overeager cosmetic person whose mission that day was to ‘redo’ me,” Barger opens, “She persuaded me that to miss what she offered was to miss the essence of femininity. ...But the salesperson’s attitude was to make certain that with layers of expensive cosmetics, I looked like everybody else.”¹⁸⁵

Barger’s concern is that the body and soul are seen as fragmented from each other in American culture, without an understanding of their interconnectedness.¹⁸⁶

In Grace Hubbard’s research on women in *Women: the Misunderstood Majority*,¹⁸⁷ she argues that whereas feminists of a previous generation may have said that men and women were entirely similar despite anatomical differences, Hubbard argues that they are not. In a book designed for those who counsel women, she claims

¹⁸⁴ Lillian Calles Barger, *Eve's Revenge: Women and A Spirituality of the Body* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000).

¹⁸⁵ Barger, *The Body Project*, 15.

¹⁸⁶ “Even though our relationship to our bodies is powerfully shaped by the world we live in, what is needed is to recognize that the body has meaning in itself, apart from the culture. Its very essence informs the nature of the self. Our body tells us something about who we are. My body is not simply a hunk of flesh. My femaleness and my race are not irrelevant biological accidents; they inform my very being. It is my soul intertwined with my body that deciphers the meaning of my material experience. It is the intertwining of soul with body that allows us as created beings to go from object to subject and to move beyond the complex social context of our lives. Can we find in the Jesus narrative a spirituality that embraces our body instead of one that continually ignores or assaults it?” (Barger 2003, 31)

¹⁸⁷ M. Gay Hubbard, *Women: The Misunderstood Majority Overcoming the Myths That Hold Women Back* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992.)

that how a counselor (or pastor or mentor) understands the worth of women will shape the questions, suggestions, and treatment plan extended to that woman. Among the most helpful tools in this book are the eight new myths of womanhood.¹⁸⁸

In one of few books equipping male and female pastors to preach to women, *Preaching that Speaks to Women*¹⁸⁹, Mathews addresses how the expectations of the culture and questions of women directly impact their spiritual lives. She points out that most pastors in America are men, yet most congregants are women. Even in the best seminaries, pastors are not taught to understand the cultural factors that impact the insecurities, relationships, and pain of their most prevalent congregants.

¹⁸⁸ The eight myths of womanhood are: First, women are no different than men. Genuine differences are limited to genital structure and functioning; all other differences are the result of gender-role socialization. Second, life patterns and life priorities for women are best when they replicate those of white male middle-class norms. Third, achievement is the only source of self-esteem and life satisfaction for the fully mature woman. Fourth, women are healthiest and happiest when they develop and use power in ways similar to those demonstrated by males. Fifth, mental health for women requires the assimilation of masculine traits and characteristics. Sixth, relationships are of no more value to women than to men except to the degree the woman is socialized to believe that they are. Seventh, marriage and family are of incidental value to the fully mature woman and so are to be incorporated into her life solely on the basis of personal and career convenience. Old myths as described by Hubbard are: the myth that women's work is less valued in comparison to work traditionally done by males, women are unable to make good decisions, women are incomplete and need men to make their lives and themselves complete, women are unstable, changeable, and unpredictable, a good woman can change a man's dysfunctional behavior by love alone, a good woman cares only for others, disregarding her own needs, if a woman is truly a good woman, she will be all that a man needs, the body is the source of a woman's identity, the good woman, if she is spiritually mature and psychologically well-adjusted cannot, by definition, be a powerful woman, and finally, a good woman is pious, pure, utterly submissive, and dedicated solely to her domestic duties. Eighth, conservative religious beliefs are inevitably destructive to women's growth and achievement. Ibid., 38-39.

¹⁸⁹ Mathews, *Preaching That Speaks To Women*.

Though there is little education done to prepare pastors for leading female congregants, there is also very little research describing masculinity. Many evangelical voices speculate about what maleness really is, but few write from a researched perspective. An important work on the topic of masculinity is Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen's work, *My Brother's Keeper: What the Social Sciences Do (And Don't) Tell Us About Masculinity*.¹⁹⁰ "Boys growing up in the context of such asymmetrical parenting must develop their sense of gender identity in the frequent or almost total absence of fathers. Thus they are apt to conclude that becoming a man means becoming as unlike women as possible."¹⁹¹ Van Leeuwen says, "I believe the most pressing question for gender relations at the turn of the third millennium is this: How can we put children first without putting women last and without putting men on the sidelines of family life?"¹⁹²

Mathews and Hubbard agree with Van Leeuwen that this is an important question for gender relations. An important point Mathews and Hubbard identify is that though marriage rates are down in America, and co-habitation statistics are heightened, this is not necessarily the moral ill that the evangelical church perceives it to be. Rather,

¹⁹⁰ Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, *My Brother's Keeper: What the Social Sciences Do (And Don't) Tell Us About Masculinity* (InterVarsity Press, 2002), 22.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 205. Van Leeuwen advocates for the full participation of fathers in parenting, suggesting that, "Children of both sexes need to grow up with stable, nurturant adult role models of both sexes to better develop a secure gender identity that then—paradoxically—allows them to relate to each other primarily as human beings, rather than as gender-role caricatures." Ibid., 208.

¹⁹² Ibid., 230.

this is a post-Christian response to, and affirmation of, the sanctity of marriage. Many young adults have been the casualties of broken homes, and now, in their own romantic relationships choose the lesser commitment of cohabitation, so as not to repeat the erratic choices of family members who went before them.¹⁹³ In *Marriage Made In Eden: A Pre-Modern Perspective for a Post-Christian World*¹⁹⁴, Alice Mathews and Grace Hubbard evaluate the culture of marriage in America and respond with a biblical case for marriage.

Conclusion

The literature contributing to the study of millennial evangelicals' responses to gender mutuality is vast. It touches theological and biblical studies of gender, generational studies of the millennials, and sociological research. This literature review is not comprehensive, but rather guides the reader through the literature most important to this body of research.

¹⁹³ “As the recent results of the year 2000 confirm, marriage as the basis of family life continues to decline in America. Since 1970 the rate of marriage has dropped by about one-third, the out-of-wedlock birth ratio has climbed from 11 percent to 33 percent of all births, the divorce rate has doubled, and the number of people living together outside of marriage has grown by over 1000 percent.” Mathews and Hubbard, *Marriage Made in Eden*, 62.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCESS

In the big armchair in my office, sat this slight-statured sophomore. He had just returned from the athletic center where he had been lifting weights. He was explaining to me the sports that he felt were appropriate for women, and those other sports that God only intended for men to play. “Women aren’t as strong as men,” he explained. ‘Yeah,’ he said as he looked at the picture on my desk of my marathon day, “women weren’t intended to be runners. They were meant to be nurturers and are more fragile than men.”

Research Objectives

This research is designed to obtain information about how millennial evangelicals are doctrinally responding to gender equality. The millennial generation is the future of the church in America. What are they hearing from the evangelical community about gender mutuality? Which voices are they allowing to influence and ultimately shape the realities of their relationships, faith practices, family dynamics, and professional ambitions? Additionally, are these believed messages voices they have heard in their evangelical upbringing?

Foundations

This research deals with both the source and content of the messages millennial evangelicals have received about gender. What did their churches teach them? What did their churches model for them? What ideologies were practiced in their homes? What Christian books did they read? Do they attend faith-affiliated colleges? Were messages of gender mutuality taught to them overtly, providing consistency between their

generational culture and the pulpit-exhortation? Or, were these messages of gender mutuality sought after independently, following a wave of hierarchical messaging in their upbringing? Or conversely, were messages of mutuality taught in their upbringing unconvincing, creating a stir for something different, perhaps something more traditional? In order to understand how millennial evangelicals are responding to messages of gender mutuality, this research investigated their doctrinal foundations of gender.

Categories

This research is designed to gather information about gender mutuality in the following categories: mutuality in cross-sex relationships, mutuality in church leadership, and mutuality in the home. Gender mutuality carries into many facets of life. However, evangelical culture has predominantly addressed the question of gender mutuality with regard to church leadership. As a result, many evangelicals have convictions about the roles women can hold in church leadership. Infrequently addressed are the relationships between men and women outside of a leadership context, situations such as dating, marriage, or parenting. The question of this research is: how are millennial evangelicals doctrinally responding to messages of gender mutuality?

Methodology

Survey Research and Statistical Analysis

A survey instrument was created to sample verbal and nonverbal messages communicated to young adults in their evangelical upbringing. Respondents were asked to indicate things that they saw or heard in their evangelical upbringing (most questions pertained to messages conveyed in the local church or youth ministry). Secondary

questioning asked respondents to evaluate how they currently feel about those sample messages. (Messages included overt doctrines as well as practices of gender equality or gender inequality.)

Research that effectively evaluates the millennial generation will be most successful if it is not time intensive and if it is web-based. Millennials are comfortable with technology. Common knowledge among those who work with millennials is that they would rather respond to a survey on their computer screen than on paper by hand. Through web-based communities like *Facebook*, *My Space*, and weblogs, millennials have learned to be candid with their emotions, ideas, and allegiances over the internet (perhaps more honest than in person). Another attribute of the millennial composition is that they are over-programmed, and thus, short on time. For these reasons, survey research and statistical analysis were chosen because they are millennial-friendly research methods. Though there are methods to gain more comprehensive data, the goal of this project was to gather broad feedback from a large sample of millennial evangelicals regarding concepts and generalities of their doctrines of gender mutuality.

Survey Content

In order to gain comprehensive data about the doctrines of gender mutuality, three distinct survey components were designed for the instrument, each assessing different qualities of gender foundations: gender roles, ideology identification, and leadership practices in the church.

Mutuality in the Sociological Roles of Male and Female

In the section about gender roles, the goal was to understand what the young adult's youth ministry had taught him/her about gender roles. Respondents were asked to

mark a box for each of the gender roles or ideas that their church's youth ministry had affirmed. A wide variety of gender role options were provided (respondents could mark as many boxes as applied.) Options included statements such as, "A man is the spiritual leader of the family," and "Women who don't dress modestly will cause men 'to stumble' sexually."¹⁹⁵ In an adjacent column, respondents were asked to mark any box with which they currently agree. Though it cannot be proven whether the messages of these youth ministries are in fact related to the ultimate doctrinal choices of the millennials, important to understanding responses is an understanding of foundations. This section provides data about the current doctrinal convictions of evangelical millennials as well as the teaching they received at a formative age.

Ideological Identification

A second goal of the research was to gather information about gender ideologies of respondents, their churches, and their families. In this section, three ideologies were presented: traditionalist, complementarian, and egalitarian. (These ideological labels were not stated but were described in generalizations.) Respondents were asked to identify the ideology which most closely matched that of the person or group indicated in the corresponding box. Matches were not expected to be exact. Respondents had the option of skipping this question if none of the ideologies were comfortably close enough. Additionally, respondents had the option to mark more than one ideology if two or more were appropriate.

¹⁹⁵The idea of "stumbling" is an evangelical colloquialism, not a direct quote from Scripture. The popularity of the term made it interesting content for study. To view the survey instrument, see appendix A.

The goal of this section was to provide a comparison of ideological association of the respondent, the respondent's home church, and the respondent's family. The design of this section necessitated classification by group ideology rather than individual ideology. Whereas one's mother may have had a different perspective from one's father, respondents were expected to choose the most prevalent themes in their familial teaching about gender ideologies. Likewise, respondents were asked to select the church which was most significant in their faith development as respondents may have attended numerous churches throughout their childhood and adolescence.

The three ideologies emphasized different components of gender doctrine. The first ideology emphasizes hierarchy, "The husband is *the* leader of the household. The husband makes *all* the decisions for the direction of the family. The wife does not have the same responsibility of leadership and therefore should serve her family and help her husband."¹⁹⁶ The second ideology emphasizes teamwork with subtle hierarchy, utilizing evangelical language inherent to the complementarian position. "The husband and wife should *work together* on decision making. Only in big decisions, or *in the case of a tie*, should the husband's opinion out-weigh the wife's opinion. The husband is the spiritual leader of the family and will therefore be held responsible for the life of the family before God."¹⁹⁷ The third ideology emphasizes mutual submission and shared decision making, "In the marriage relationship, God did not intend there to be a leader. Both husband and wife should be *equally submitted* to each other and are *equally held responsible* for the

¹⁹⁶ Table 7

¹⁹⁷ Table 7

life of their family. Both husband and wife are instructed to be spiritual leaders of the family.”¹⁹⁸

Mutuality in Church Leadership.

The third part of the research evaluated the leadership practices of the church. The goal of this section was to learn which messages were communicated non-verbally to millennials by their churches regarding mutuality in church leadership. This survey collected data regarding the jobs or tasks deemed appropriate for women (as men have traditionally and without contention held leadership roles in the evangelical church.) A list of church offices and tasks was provided. Respondents were asked to mark any of the statements that applied (again basing answers on the church experience which had the most significant impact on their faith development.) The prompt was, “In my church, I saw women...” Options ranged from “give announcements from the pulpit” to “hold the office of senior pastor.” In an adjacent column, respondents were asked to mark any of the options that matched the prompt, “I believe women can...” This provided a comparative analysis for the non-verbal teaching of churches and the ideologies of respondents. Respondents were asked to skip this section if they were unable to identify a church that had contributed to their faith development, if they were undecided in their own ideologies, or if there was some other cognitive dissonance attributed to this section.

Demographic and Distribution

A web survey company called, *Survey Monkey* managed the survey instrument. The web-link was electronically mailed to fifty seven undergraduate students, fifteen graduate students, ten pastors, twelve young professionals, and nineteen Christian college

¹⁹⁸ Table 7

personnel. A total of 113 surveys were distributed. In order to participate in this survey, respondents needed to be in the age range of 14-32. At the end of the survey, the survey company gave respondents the opportunity to share the instrument with others of the same demographic: 14-32 year old, evangelical Americans. This solicited a response of 328 respondents. The survey instrument yielded responses from regions, universities, and denominations more far-reaching than had been projected. The yield was later filtered to include only the 195 respondents from the millennial-generation: those between the ages 18-25.

Summary

The objective of this survey instrument was to gather information about millennial evangelicals' doctrinal responses to gender mutuality. This was carried out with a survey instrument including three components of gender mutuality: mutuality in church leadership, ideological identification, and gender norms. A sample of the survey instrument and findings are provided in Appendix A and B.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES OF THE RESEARCH

As we drove to lunch, she shared her frustration with me. “I just wish my boyfriend wanted to do a Bible study with me.” “Are you sure he doesn’t?” I asked. “Well, he hasn’t suggested it!” she said with a tone of irritation. “Have you told him that you want to do a Bible study with him?” I asked. “No, but I’ve been praying that he’ll come up with it on his own. After all, he is the spiritual leader of our dating relationship. I don’t want to take that role away from him.”

Results

Millennials and Church Doctrines

The research yielded a sample of 195 millennial evangelicals between the ages of 18-25.¹⁹⁹ Of the 195 respondents, 185 (95 percent) said that they had heard topics regarding dating or marriage taught in a church setting (worship services, youth group, church retreats, chapels, etc.) When asked *what* they were taught about mutuality in cross-sex relationships in their church’s youth ministry, responses revealed a significant contrast between the teachings of the churches and the current beliefs of the millennials.

¹⁹⁹ One hundred and thirteen surveys were distributed. The sample yielded a higher than projected respondent pool. This may be attributed to millennials’ interest in this topic. Respondents were free to pass the web-link on to others within the research demographic upon completion of the instrument. Additionally, the popularity of this survey instrument suggests that a web-based instrument was effective, as was projected. Additionally, results were guaranteed to be random as respondent groups were not controlled.

Table 1: Percentage of Responses Relating to Female Modesty

Ideology	My church's youth ministry affirmed that...	I currently agree that...
Women who do not dress modestly will cause men to stumble sexually.	.77	.44

Table 2: Percentage of Responses Relating to Male Spiritual Leadership

Ideology	My church's youth ministry affirmed that...	I currently agree that...
A man is the spiritual leader of the family.	.74	.46

Table 3: Percentage of Responses Relating to Mutual Spiritual Leadership

Ideology	My church's youth ministry affirmed that...	I currently agree that...
Husbands and wives are both called to be spiritual leaders of the family.	.40	.77

Table 4: Percentage of Responses Relating to Wifely Submission

Ideology	My church's youth ministry affirmed that...	I currently agree that...
A wife should submit to her husband	.69	.40

Table 5: Percentage of Responses Relating to Mutual Submission

Ideology	My church's youth ministry affirmed that...	I currently agree that...
Husbands and wives should submit to each other	.46	.85

Table 6: Percentage of Responses Relating to Decision-Making

Ideology	My church's youth ministry affirmed that...	I currently agree that...
A husband has the final say in the big decisions	.39	.12

Millennials showed an ideological difference from that of their churches. When asked to identify the gender ideology that most closely matched that of their parents, millennials once again expressed ideological distinction between their own espoused

doctrines and those of their parents. In both comparisons, millennials chose a more gender-mutual ideology than did their church or their family.

Table 7: How Respondents' Ideologies Matched Their Church's Ideology

When asked which ideology most closely matched the belief of their church, the percentage of respondents indicated:²⁰⁰

Ideology	Family	Church	Self
The husband is the leader of the household. The husband makes all the decisions for the direction of the family. The wife does not have the same responsibility of leadership and should serve her family and help her husband.	.08	.36	.05
The husband and the wife should work together on decision making. Only in the big decisions, or in the case of a tie, should the husband's opinion outweigh the wife's opinion. The husband is the spiritual leader of the family and will therefore be held responsible for the life of the family before God.	.51	.49	.38
In the marriage relationship, God didn't intend there to be a leader. Both husband and wife should be equally submitted to each other and are equally held responsible for the life of the family. Both husband and wife are instructed to be spiritual leaders of the family.	.30	.15	.56

When this same group of millennials was asked about gender norms in their church's leadership, millennials, again, indicated a contrast between the messages communicated by their churches and their own personal doctrines of gender. Numerous leadership positions were investigated. In church tasks related to stage presence, spiritual traditions (or sacraments), and large audiences, the distinction between the practices of the churches and the beliefs of the millennials surfaced. Churches tended to eliminate women from these tasks. Millennials diverged from the practiced beliefs of the church, suggesting that women also can occupy these tasks.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ This section yielded 194 respondents, 143 of which were female and fifty one of which were male.

²⁰¹ For a complete report of statistics, please see Appendix B.

Table 8: Percentage of Responses Relating to Church Roles

	In my church I saw women...	I currently believe women can...
Give announcements from the pulpit	.82	.87
Give missions reports from the pulpit	.85	.86
Lead a corporate prayer from the pulpit	.70	.85
Share her testimony from the pulpit.	.80	.86
Preach a sermon on a special occasion	.54	.75
Get ordained	.28	.68
Serve as a deacon	.43	.73
Serve as an elder	.41	.71
Serve as a youth pastor	.43	.76
Serve as a college pastor	.22	.69
Hold the office of associate pastor	.21	.66
Do hospital visitations	.69	.84
Teach adult education classes	.67	.83
Perform weddings	.12	.62
Baptize.	.19	.65
Offer communion.	.41	.76
Perform funerals.	.12	.65
Hold the office of senior pastor.	.07	.55

These statistics identify that there is an emerging reality in evangelical culture: a disparity between the teaching of the church and the theological convictions of young adults. This is not to say that young adults do not have theological convictions, because these findings suggest that they do. It might even be said that the theological convictions of these young adults are strong enough to challenge their loyalty to the teaching of their

churches. These findings suggest that millennial evangelicals are embracing doctrines of gender mutuality. These findings also suggest that many of the churches of millennial evangelicals are not teaching (verbally or nonverbally) gender mutuality.

Influential Voices

The question remains: who are millennial evangelicals listening to for their developing gender ideologies? If not to their churches, then to whom? There is no clear answer to this question, but there are some clues.

Table 9: Percentage of Responses Relating to Ideologies and Family Beliefs²⁰²

Ideology	Respondents from complementarian families	Respondents from egalitarian families.
The husband is the leader of the household. The husband makes all the decisions for the direction of the family. The wife does not have the same responsibility of leadership and therefore should serve her family and her husband.	.06	.02
The husband and wife should work together on decision making. Only in big decisions, or in the case of a tie, should the husband's opinion out-weigh the wife's opinion. The husband is the spiritual leader of the family and will therefore be held responsible for the life of the family before God.	.46	.33
In the marriage relationship, God didn't intend there to be a leader. Both husband and wife should be equally submitted to each other and are equally held responsible for the life of their family. Both husband and wife are instructed to be spiritual leaders of the family.	.55	.71

Respondents tended to be more mutuality minded than did their families. Of respondents who identified their families as complementarian in nature (identifying their families with ideas of working together but ultimate male leadership), forty-six percent

²⁰² Fifty-five egalitarian-reared respondents and ninety-five complementarian-reared respondents participated in this study. Respondents were given the option to identify with more than one category, a variable that impacts the percentage points.

agreed with the doctrines their families had taught, whereas fifty-five percent identified themselves as egalitarian in belief, favoring ideas of mutual submission and decision making. Respondents from egalitarian families, largely identified themselves with the ideology taught in their families, as seventy-one percent of these respondents identified with the ideology that illustrated mutuality.²⁰³

Of 195 respondents, 140 (72 percent) said that they had read Christian books about dating, marriage, masculinity or femininity. Female respondents most frequently listed these evangelical book titles (in order of readership): *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*; *The Five Love Languages*, *Wild at Heart*, *Passion and Purity*, *Boy Meets Girl*, and *Captivating*. Male respondents most frequently listed these book titles: *Wild at Heart*, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, *Boy Meets Girl*, *Every Man's Battle*, and *The Five Love Languages*. A cursory overview of content in this literature sample suggests that these ideas are only, in part, feeding the doctrinal responses of millennial evangelicals, as many of these authors offer a more traditional view of gender doctrine than the millennials profess.²⁰⁴

Additionally, millennials were asked to identify the relationships that had been most significant in their gender ideology shift. Below are listed the top ten most influential relationships that millennials associated with gender ideological shifts.

²⁰³ Of interest was that 35 percent of respondents who grew up in egalitarian families self-identified with ideologies including male leadership. The findings do not suggest why egalitarian-reared millennials may choose traditional or complementarian beliefs.

²⁰⁴ A thorough content analysis of the evangelical gender literature selections of millennials in comparison with their doctrine and/or practices would be valuable research for future study.

Table 10: Percentage of Responses Relating to Influential Relationships²⁰⁵

Relationship	Percentage of Respondents
Female friend	.40
Male friend	.29
Professor	.28
Mentor	.27
Pastor	.26
Boyfriend	.25
Mother	.24
Spouse	.21
Author	.21
Father	.17

These data suggest that peer relationships may have a notable influence on gender doctrines. Subsequently, the high indicator of professorial influence should not be overlooked. Perhaps the academy has had a significant role in educating millennials about gender ideologies. It should also be noted that of the 195 participants in this study, 166 (85 percent) had attended a faith-affiliated college or university; this quite possibly accounting for millennials' acknowledgment of professors as significant influences in the shaping of their gender doctrines as they pertain to church leadership and Christian marriage.

²⁰⁵ Ninety two respondents participated in this section, twenty seven of whom were males and sixty five of whom were females.

Table 11: Percentage of Responses Relating to Relationships and Female Respondents

Relationship	Percentage of Female Respondents
Female Friend	.42
Boyfriend	.34
Professor	.31
Mentor	.28
Pastor	.26
Male Friend	.26

Table 12: Percentage of Responses Relating to Relationships and Male Respondents

Relationship	Percentage of Male Respondents
Girlfriend	.52
Female Friend	.37
Male Friend	.37
Mother	.30
Spouse	.30

When these influential-relationship results are broken down according to the sex of the respondent, the answers are not exceptionally different. Both sexes identify female peer relationships to have been influential in gender doctrines shifts. Additionally, both male and female respondents recognize the dating relationship as a contributor to ideas about gender doctrine.²⁰⁶ In this sample females were more likely than males to be

²⁰⁶ What is unclear is whether for these respondents, dating relationships are shifting gender doctrines towards hierarchy or toward mutuality. Much of the evangelical teaching about dating relationships has a hierarchical spin, thereby suggesting a question for further research: how are the dating relationships of millennial evangelicals influencing their gender doctrines?

influenced by relationships outside of peer or family relationships, exhibiting trust in professors, mentors, and pastors for the shaping of gender doctrine. Male gender ideologies seemed most closely impacted by relationships where there was a direct observation of the personal life.²⁰⁷

Similarities and Differences in the Responses of Males and Females

Female Modesty

When results were filtered according to sex of the respondent, males' and females' responses were similar. In the section entitled 'gender norms,' males and females both indicated that their church's youth ministry had taught them that women who do not dress modestly will 'cause men to stumble' sexually. However, approximately fifteen percent more females indicated that their youth ministry had taught them this idea. This distinction may be because many youth ministries will separate the young women from the young men to discuss appropriate dress and sexual conduct.

Table 13: Percentage of Responses Relating to Female Modesty Filtered by Sex

Ideology	Females	Males
My church's youth ministry affirmed the women who do not dress modestly will cause men to stumble.	.82	.66
I currently agree that women who do not dress modestly will cause men to stumble.	.42	.50

²⁰⁷ In the interviews included in appendix C, descriptive datum revealed that for each of the men interviewed it was personal observation of gifted women that had been the catalyst for their deeply embedded convictions. It wasn't through abstract ideas that men came to care about gender mutuality, it was through watching gifted women that they personally cared about, being left out of the ministry of the church or silenced for using their voices. A consistent finding was that men viewed gender equality as an idea until it became personalized, whereas women more consistently viewed gender equality as directly personal, either free license to be themselves or a limitation to authentic personhood.

When asked if they currently agree with the idea of female modesty, male and female responses were less than those of church teachings. However, fifty percent of males responded in favor of this idea (which was higher than the female sample by eight percentage points.) This idea may be more often taught under a gender ideology that supports hierarchy, as it may subtly place blame on women for men's sexual struggles and does not teach men to take responsibility for their own sexual mistakes. For this reason, it is consistent with other gender mutuality findings that millennials are not as supportive of this idea as their churches may have been.

Spiritual Leadership

Two questions surrounded the idea of spiritual leadership. The phrase, “spiritual leadership” is a popular colloquialism in evangelicalism. In fact, there is no biblical reference which includes the phrase, “spiritual leader of the family.” This idea comes from the Greek word *kephale*, which means “head.” This Greek word does not denote leadership. Nowhere in Scripture does the word *kephale* refer to headship of the home or of the family. 1 Corinthians 11:3 calls the husband “the head of his wife,” which is a metaphor of unity. Scripture does not directly call either the husband or the wife, “spiritual leaders of the family.” This idea of headship has been patched together using a few widely debated passages of Scripture and was made popular in late twentieth century evangelicalism.

Table 14: Percentage of Responses Relating to Male Spiritual Leadership Filtered by Sex

Ideology	Females	Males
My church's youth ministry taught me that a man is the spiritual leader of the family.	.80	.61
I currently agree that a man is the spiritual leader of the family.	.43	.52

Table 15: Percentage of Responses Relating to Mutual Spiritual Leadership Filtered by Sex

Ideology	Females	Males
My church's youth ministry taught me that husbands and wives are both called to be spiritual leaders of the family.	.35	.52
I currently agree that husbands and wives are both called to be spiritual leaders of the family.	.81	.68

Based on the fact that this idea is not drawn directly from a passage of Scripture, it is interesting to note that males and females both reported that their churches had taught them that the man is the spiritual leader of the family. More females than males reported that their churches had taught that both spouses were spiritual leaders. The majority of the respondent pool indicated that they agreed with the idea that both male and female are the spiritual leaders.

Submission

The following two questions were regarding ideas of marital submission. Throughout Christian history, many churches have taught that it is the job of a wife to submit to her husband, basing this principle on Eph 5: 22, "Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord." However, just one verse before, in Eph 5:21, as the opening to a passage about marriage, the author writes, "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." Ephesians 5 therefore is the foundation for two different ideologies of marital submission, one suggesting mutual submission, the other suggesting wifely submission.

Table 16: Percentage of Responses Relating to Wifely Submission Filtered by Sex

Ideology	Females	Males
My church's youth ministry taught me that a wife should submit to her husband.	.71	.64
I currently agree that a wife should submit to her husband.	.36	.50

Table 17: Percentage of Responses Relating to Mutual Submission Filtered by Sex

Ideology	Females	Males
My church's youth ministry taught me that husbands and wives should submit to each other.	.39	.61
I currently agree that husbands and wives should submit to each other.	.85	.84

Respondents of both sexes indicated that their church's youth ministries had taught them wifely submission. However, by only a slightly wider margin the males suggested that their churches had predominantly taught wifely submission, more so than female respondents' churches. Male and female respondents identified mutual submission as most closely resonating with their own beliefs, with 85 percent of female and 84 percent of male respondents marking that they "currently agree that husbands and wives should submit to each other."

In the question focused specifically on wifely submission, 50 percent of males agreed a wife should submit to her husband. In these questions, respondents had the freedom to mark both the mutual submission and the wifely submission boxes. It is possible that egalitarian male respondents felt limited by the statement, "I currently agree a wife should submit to her husband," as this is half of mutual submission concept. Adherents to mutual submission may have indicated that they too agreed with wifely submission.

Church Leadership

Table 18: Percentage of Responses Relating to Church Tasks with Sex-Filtered Responses

Church Tasks	In my church I saw women...	In my church I saw women...	I currently believe women can...	I currently believe women can...
	(Female Respondents)	(Male Respondents)	(Female Respondents)	(Male Respondents)
Give announcements from the pulpit	.82	.82	.86	.88
Give missions reports from the pulpit	.86	.84	.84	.92
Lead a corporate prayer from the pulpit	.68	.76	.84	.88
Share her testimony from the pulpit.	.79	.84	.85	.90
Preach a sermon on a special occasion	.53	.56	.76	.84
Get ordained	.25	.36	.67	.68
Serve as a deacon	.42	.46	.72	.76
Serve as an elder	.37	.52	.70	.72
Serve as a youth pastor	.39	.54	.78	.72
Serve as a college pastor	.14	.42	.67	.74
Hold the office of associate pastor	.19	.28	.64	.74
Do hospital visitations	.70	.66	.82	.90
Teach adult education classes	.65	.72	.81	.88
Perform weddings	.09	.32	.61	.66
Baptize.	.14	.24	.65	.66
Offer communion.	.39	.38	.75	.78
Perform funerals.	.11	.24	.66	.62
Hold the office of senior pastor.	.05	.10	.55	.58

Though there was a moderate degree of variance between female and male responses regarding the involvement of women in church leadership that they observed in their churches, male respondents reported slightly higher observation of female church leaders. This distinction between male and female observation of female leaders in

church ministry would be interesting subject matter for further study. Persons may be more likely to be aware of the presence of those who are like themselves. Could it be that female respondents know for a fact that they have not seen female leaders in these roles because they are aware of leaders who are representative of their own sex? Or, could it be that male respondents truly saw more female leaders in their churches than did the female respondents? Which sex would be more likely to designate the most accurate response in this category, the male respondent who has a different body and experience from the female leader, or the female respondent who may be looking for role models from her same sex? The answer is unknown, but the data suggest that male respondents perceive their church experiences to have included more female leadership than did the female respondents.

As male respondents reported having seen more female leaders in their churches, there is a positive correlation between their experience and their current beliefs. (Or perhaps the opposite: a high correlation between their beliefs and their reported experience.) Males consistently report affirmation of female leadership in the church, more so than female respondents. In only two instances did females report higher affirmation of female church leadership than did their male counterparts. These instances were in the categories of “serve as a youth pastor” and “perform funerals.” In these categories female respondents were only two to four percent higher than male respondents. This finding suggests that male millennial evangelicals may be more affirming of female church leadership than female millennial evangelicals.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ This section yielded response of 182 millennials of which fifty were male and 132 were female.

Ideology

Table 19: Percentage of Responses Relating to Ideologies with Sex-Filtered Responses

Ideology	Females	Males
The husband is the leader of the household. The husband makes all the decisions for the direction of the family. The wife does not have the same responsibility of leadership and should serve her family and help her husband.	.05	.06
The husband and the wife should work together on decision making. Only in the big decisions, or in the case of a tie, should the husband's opinion out-weigh the wife's opinion. The husband is the spiritual leader of the family and will therefore be held responsible for the life of the family before God.	.36	.46
In the marriage relationship, God didn't intend there to be a leader. Both husband and wife should be equally submitted to each other and are equally held responsible for the life of the family. Both husband and wife are instructed to be spiritual leaders of the family.	.59	.48

In the final section entitled ideology, female respondents exhibited slightly more commitment to an egalitarian ideology, with 59 percent identifying with ideas of mutual submission and shared familial leadership, and 36 percent identifying with a more complementarian viewpoint of shared decision making, but ultimate male leadership. Males exhibited slightly more divided ideological commitment, with 48 percent identifying with gender mutuality, and 46 percent identifying with shared decision making and ultimate male leadership.

Limitations of the Research and Questions for Further Inquiry

The first limitation of this research is that many evangelicals have attended more than one church over the course of their lifetime. This may be due to relocation or simply dissatisfaction with some element of the church experience. Nonetheless, respondents faced the task of selecting which church had the greatest impact on their faith development for responses related to sections 'ideology' and 'church leadership.' This variable had significant influence on the results. Had respondents selected a different church, responses may have been different.

Similarly, in question twelve, respondents were asked to base answers on their church's youth ministry. Though respondents were instructed not to answer if this section did not pertain to their experience, the survey instrument did not account for instances in which young adults attended more than one church youth ministry. Some millennials may have attended more than one at a time, or the teachings were different in the junior high youth ministry from in the high school youth ministry, or in other situations families may have relocated or transferred church membership.

The third limitation is with the increasing transience in American culture, the task of identifying the influence of a church community on the ideological development of an individual becomes more difficult. The disparity between the ideologies of young adults and the teaching of evangelical churches about gender mutuality may be attributed less to the lack of representation of gender mutuality doctrine in local churches and attributed more to the lack of consistent pastoral voices. Millennials may have speculated in the survey about their church's doctrines with insufficient knowledge of the church's actual position or practices regarding gender mutuality. Perhaps millennials are aware of their own beliefs, but because of the transience of their own lives have not become deeply acquainted with the ideologies of their churches. What was clear from this study is that millennials *perceive* their churches to have been more conservative on issues of gender than they consider themselves to be.

The fourth limitation of the data is its inability to explain the cause of this disparity. There could be a wide array of reasons for the disparity: one possibility is the growing gender equality of the secular culture. Women are being welcomed into leadership positions across the culture and media are creating a reality of mutuality

between the sexes in work and personal relationships. Perhaps millennials are growing more egalitarian in their doctrines of gender because of the messages that are surrounding them daily.

A final limitation of this study is its inability to evaluate millennials' knowledge of the biblical support for gender doctrines. If they have learned their gender doctrines from peers, they may have a difficult time articulating the biblical evidence for gender mutuality. It would seem that the natural spiritual mentors in the lives of these millennials (parents, pastors, mentors, and churches) would be the ones to influence the gender doctrines of the millennials most and that with that influence may come biblical support for the taught doctrine. However, since there is a clear disparity between the doctrines of millennials and their evangelical communities, the task of educating millennials is left to peers, gender literature, the academy, and the culture at large.

A recommendation for further research is the evaluation of the doctrines of millennial evangelicals who are not regular church-attenders. These millennial evangelicals who are choosing not to attend church regularly may be the same group that fall into the belief-practice gap: presumably, the millennials who believe and practice gender mutuality, but who have not been taught the biblical premise for gender mutuality. This to say, it is likely that those millennials who do not attend their local churches with regularity are those who have strong socially-conscious convictions, but who are not hearing biblical doctrines taught or overtly validated in their local churches. This is a recommendation for further research and potentially a cause for concern in the evangelical community. Could it be that young evangelicals who “do justice and love mercy” may be the very population who do not sense allied support from their churches?

Another topic for future study is the strength of professed commitment to their doctrines of gender. Use of the Lickert scale (or another scale determining variance) to gauge commitment to doctrines of women in leadership in the church, partnership in the home, and gender stereotypical roles in cross-sex relationships will be important for future research.

Recommendations for Response

Young evangelicals are seeking understanding of biblical manhood and biblical womanhood. They are reading books, listening to sermons, and engaging in conversations with peers and mentors about these topics. They are coming to conclusions that women are equally gifted with men in the workplace and in the home. Even for millennials who embrace hierarchy, this doctrine has not been organic in the experience of millennials. Both sexes have received equal opportunities. Hierarchy has not been the reality that they have lived. To practice hierarchy in twenty-first century America necessitates an intentional divergence from cultural norms. When millennials are taught only hierarchy in their church communities, there is a growing gap between the cultural reality and the doctrine of the church.

Similarly, egalitarian Christian community has been practicing gender mutuality without often teaching the biblical premise for this value to young adults. The research supports egalitarian communities not only practicing but also teaching the fundamental doctrines that guide their gender-mutual ethos. The research suggests that gender mutuality has been a kept secret told only on the fringes of evangelical culture. Millennial respondents make a case that these topics relate directly to the whole of the congregation.

Additionally, the millennial generation, for better or for worse, is a generation of consumers. They are attracted to products that they desire. This is no different for their pursuit of the local church. If they are not being spiritually or intellectually fed and if they are not given opportunities to use their giftedness (as males or females), they will not sit around waiting for the tides to change. Millennials do not have the same level of loyalty to religious practices that the generations preceding them had. They are not convinced that if they follow a formula it will produce the desired outcome. Millennials like instant gratification and immediate results. Study of the millennial culture supposes that millennials may not continue attending local churches with hope that one day they will hear gender mutuality taught. They are far more likely to choose a different church or to give up on church attendance altogether.

Finally, the implication of this study is that the term “gender-equality” conveys for this generation ideas of woman-power, rather than complementarity (male-female mutuality in relationship.) This perception would be another valuable area of study. Do millennials understand gender mutuality to be mutually liberating or do they understand gender mutuality to be the continued misperception, residual of the radical feminist agenda, that gender mutuality really means female domination?

Research Summary

In summary, this research concerns gender mutuality, the idea that both males and females are gifted and benefit from the empowerment, contribution, and voice of the other. It is not a radical feminist theology, nor is it androcentric theology. Chapter two provides a biblical framework for gender mutuality that exhorts believers to consider others better than oneself, to lay down one’s life for the another, to love one’s neighbor as

oneself. Gender mutuality builds on the idea that God created humanity for relationship with God first, thus the creation of only one human at the origin of humanity.

Additionally, following a God-centered human existence, humans of both sexes were called to the same tasks: to be in dominion over the earth and to multiply on the earth.

One sex was not made superior to the other. One sex was not created to lead the other.

Chapter three explores literature around gender mutuality. Precedent research suggests the global good of gender mutuality: when gender equality is present, domestic violence and cases of sexual assault decrease. Subsequently, self-esteem, career ambition, and educational goals increase for women. Marriages have been found to have more of the self-proclaimed measures of satisfaction when gender mutuality is present. When gender mutuality is absent, ideas of hierarchy contribute to global poverty in the practices of decreased equality in educational opportunities, increased sexually transmitted disease, increased sex-slave trade, increased overpopulation, and increased domestic violence.

Chapters four and five examine methodology and findings of the research. The research suggests that these ideas of gender mutuality are being embraced by millennial evangelicals. They are choosing doctrines that are more gender mutual than their churches or family are teaching. They are reading evangelical literature about gender (though there may be disparity between the teachings of these publications and the embraced doctrines of the millennial generation evangelicals.)

What remains to be seen is whether millennial evangelicals can articulate the biblical premise for their doctrine or whether they believe it because it “just makes

sense.” Evangelical communities are advised to educate millennials about gender mutuality, starting with the often debated Pauline passages.

Finally, resources for educating millennial evangelicals have been included as an appendix to this project. These resources have been created for millennials and their mentors. Millennials are an over-stimulated, information-bombarded, over-programmed generation. They have little time to read and study topics of interest. As such, some of the resources have been created to skim-read quickly for maximum comprehension. For the millennial generation, conversation is a favored mode of learning, so an interactive seminar and various exercises. Additionally, findings suggest that millennials may have received limited teaching about gender mutuality from their churches, and more specifically, from the pulpit. For this reason, three sample sermon outlines have been included to guide pastors in introducing gender mutuality through homiletics. Evangelical communities are advised to utilize these and create new resources for educating millennial evangelicals about biblical doctrines of gender mutuality.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Survey Instrument

Developing a Theology of Gender: A Study of American Evangelical Young Adults [Exit this survey >>](#)

1. Demographics

1. Please indicate your age.

2. Please indicate your sex.

Male

Female

☐☐

3. In which U.S. state have you lived for the majority of your life?

4. Which descriptor most fits the community from which you come?

☐

Urban

☐

Rural

☐

Suburban

6. Which word best describes the kind of high school you attended?

- ☐ Public
- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Catholic
- ☐ Private, without faith affiliation
- ☐ Homeschool

7. If you have ever been enrolled in a faith affiliated college or university, please indicate the name and location of the school/s below.

8. If you attended church regularly (at least once a month) DURING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL YEARS, please indicate the denomination of the church/es below.

9. If you attend/ed church regularly (at least once a month) DURING YOUR COLLEGE YEARS, please indicate the denomination of the church/es below.

2. What I Heard.

In the "What I Heard" section of this survey, questions have been designed to gather information about the messages that were conveyed to you about gender roles and/or experiences from those in your faith community.

10. Have you heard topics regarding dating or marriage taught in a church setting (worship services, youth group, church retreats, chapels, etc?)

Yes



No



11. Have you attended a Christian conference or retreat with a theme specifically designed for either men or for women?

☐

No, I have never attended a conference or retreat of this nature.

☐

Yes, in junior high

☐

Yes, in high school

☐

Yes, in college

☐

Yes, a church retreat

☐

Yes, a Christian camp/conference not associated with my local church

☐

Other (please specify)

12. Please indicate any of the following concepts or phrases that you heard affirmed in the language, or teaching, of your church's youth ministry. In the adjacent columns please indicate what you agreed with at the time your church affirmed it, and what you think now. Leave any blank that don't apply.

	What My Church's Youth Ministry Affirmed...	I Agreed with My Church's Youth Ministry at the time...	What I Agree With Now...
People should date and marry people of the same faith.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A woman should be pursued.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A man is the spiritual leader of the family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Husbands and wives are both called to be spiritual leaders of the family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A wife should submit to her husband.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Husbands and wives should be submitted to each other.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women were created to help men.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A husband has the final say in the big decisions (such as which church to attend, where to move, children's schools, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A godly man should be a good steward of his body; exercising, eating right, and looking nice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A godly woman should be a good steward of her body; exercising, eating right, and looking nice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Godly men should be protectors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Godly women should be protectors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Godly women should be gentle.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Godly men should be gentle.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Godly men should be warriors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
God wants men to be peacemakers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women fall into sexual temptation easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women who do not dress modestly will cause men "to stumble" sexually.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Men should be careful not to make a women "stumble" sexually.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Men cannot be trusted working in the church's children's ministry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
God wants women to be peacemakers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women are more relational than men.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People enjoy listening to men preach more than to women.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The man should initiate and pay for the couple's dates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Men fall into sexual temptation easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. With reference to the last section (question 12), if your current opinions have significantly shifted, please indicate the relationship/s with whom you most associate this shift.

- ☐ Spouse
- ☐ Boyfriend
- ☐ Girlfriend
- ☐ Professor
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Friend—Male
- ☐ Friend—Female
- ☐ Father
- ☐ Mother
- ☐ Sister
- ☐ Brother
- ☐ Extended Family Member
- ☐ Employer
- ☐ Colleague
- ☐ Pastor
- ☐ Author

3. What I Saw

In this final section of the survey entitled, "What I Saw," questions are designed to gather information about the nonverbal messages that have been communicated to you about gender roles and/or experiences in your faith community.

14. Please indicate the level of expectation you have sensed from the following sources to find a spouse before graduating from college.

No expectation

Pressured
expectation

Peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spiritual mentors/youth pastors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
College/university employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yourself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Please indicate the ideology which MOST CLOSELY relates to the belief of the following people. The choices provided may not match perfectly. Please choose the concept that most closely corresponds, or, if none of them are close, leave the column blank.

(*Use the church experience which has had the most significant influence on your faith development.)

Church

Family

Self

1. The husband is THE leader of the household. The

☐
☐
☐

husband makes ALL the decisions for the direction of the family. The wife does not have the same responsibility of leadership and therefore should serve her family and help her husband.

2. The husband and the wife should WORK TOGETHER on decision making. Only in big decisions, or IN THE CASE OF A TIE, should the husband's opinion out-weigh the wife's opinion. The husband is the spiritual leader of the family and will therefore be held responsible for the life of the family before God.

☐☐☐

3. In the marriage relationship, God didn't intend there to be a leader. Both husband and wife should be EQUALLY SUBMITTED to each other and are EQUALLY HELD RESPONSIBLE for the life of their family. Both husband and wife are instructed to be spiritual leaders of the family.

☐☐☐

16. Please mark all of the statements that apply. Leave any blank that don't apply.

	In my church, I SAW women...	I believe women can...
Give announcements from the pulpit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Give missions reports from the pulpit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lead a corporate prayer from the pulpit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Share her testimony from the pulpit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preach a sermon on a special occasion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preach a sermon as often as a man.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preach a sermon if she is ordained in the denomination.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get ordained.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serve as a deacon.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serve as an elder.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lead women's ministries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teach Sunday school for children under the age of 13.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer in the youth ministries program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teach in the youth ministries program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serve as a youth pastor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer in the college ministry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teach in the college ministry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serve as a college pastor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hold the office of associate pastor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hold the office of senior pastor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serve as an administrative assistant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plan retreats.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Lead the budget and finance committees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do hospital visitations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teach adult education classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform weddings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baptize.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer communion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform funerals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serve as a worship pastor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sing in the choir.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. Please mark any influential Christian books you have read on the topics of dating, marriage, masculinity, femininity, or other gender-related topics.

- ☐ Boy Meets Girl. Joshua Harris
- ☐ Captivating. John and Stasi Eldredge
- ☐ Community 101. Gilbert Bilezikian
- ☐ Every Man's Battle. Stephen Arterburn
- ☐ Every Woman's Battle. Stephen Arterburn
- ☐ Every Young Man's Battle. Stephen Arterburn
- ☐ Gender and Grace. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen.
- ☐ I Kissed a lot of Frogs: but the Prince Hasn't Come. Kathleen Hardaway
- ☐ I Kissed Dating Goodbye. Joshua Harris
- ☐ Lady in Waiting. Kendall and Jones
- ☐ Men, Women, and the Church. Sarah Sumner
- ☐ Passion and Purity. Elisabeth Elliot
- ☐ Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. Piper and Grudem
- ☐ The Five Love Languages. Gary Chapman
- ☐ Wild at Heart. John Eldredge
- ☐ When God Writes Your Love Story. Ludy and Ludy
- ☐ Women, Authority, and the Bible. Alvera Mickelsen

APPENDIX B

SURVEY RESULTS

Respondents Ages 18-22

I. Demographics.

1. Please indicate your age.			
		Response Percent	Response Total
18-22		1.0	125
23-25		0%	0
Total Respondents			125

2. Please indicate your sex.			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Male		.304	38
Female		.696	87
Total Respondents			125

3. Which word best describes the kind of high school you attended?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Public		.704	88
Christian		.232	29
Catholic		.4	5
Private, without faith affiliation		.08	1
Homeschool		.32	4

Total Respondents	125
--------------------------	------------

4a. If you have ever been enrolled in a faith affiliated college or university, please indicate the name and location of the school/s below.

Total Respondents	111
--------------------------	------------

4b. If you have ever been enrolled in a faith affiliated college or university, please indicate the name and location of the school/s below. (Number of respondents)

1.	Anderson University, IN	1
2.	Azusa Pacific University	33
3.	Biola University, La Mirada, CA	2
4.	California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, CA	1
5.	Evangel University, Springfield, MO	1
6.	Gordon College	41
7.	Houghton College, Houghton, NY	7
8.	Lee University, Cleveland TN	1
9.	Messiah College, Grantham, PA	1
10.	Milligan College	7
11.	North Greenville University	1
12.	Vanguard University, Costa Mesa, CA	10
13.	Westmont College, Santa Barbara, CA	7
14.	Whitworth College, Spokane, WA	1

5a. If you attended church regularly (at least once a month) DURING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL YEARS, please indicate the denomination of the church/es below.

[View](#) Total Respondents 123

5b. If you attended church regularly (at least once a month) DURING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL YEARS, please indicate the denomination of the church/es below.

1.	American General Baptist	1
2.	Assemblies of God	8
3.	Associated Reformed Presbyterian	1
4.	Baptist	10
5.	Catholic Church	2
6.	Christian and Missionary Alliance	1
7.	Christian Orthodox	1
8.	Christian Reformed	2
9.	Church of Christ Holiness	1
10.	Congregational	4
11.	Episcopal	4
12.	Evangelical Covenant	1
13.	Evangelical Free	16
14.	Evangelical Presbyterian	1
15.	Foursquare	3
16.	Free Methodist	1
17.	Friends Church	1
18.	International Pentecostal Holiness Church	1
19.	Lutheran	2
20.	Mennonite	2
21.	Nazarene	1
22.	Non-denominational	38
23.	Orthodox Presbyterian	1
24.	Pentecostal	1
25.	Plymouth Brethren	1
26.	Presbyterian	15
27.	Presbyterian Church of America	2

28.	Quaker	1
29.	Reformed Church of America	1
30.	Salvation Army	1
31.	Seventh-Day Adventist	1
32.	Southern Baptist	2
33.	United Church of Christ	1
34.	Vineyard Church	1

6. If you attend/ed church regularly (at least once a month) DURING YOUR COLLEGE YEARS, please indicate the denomination of the church/es below.

[View](#) Total Respondents 111

If you attend/ed church regularly (at least once a month) DURING YOUR COLLEGE YEARS, please indicate the denomination of the church/es below. (Number of respondents)

<u>1.</u>	Assemblies of God	7
2.	Baptist	18
3.	Brethren	1
4.	Calvary Chapel	2
5.	Christian Orthodox	1
6.	Church of God	1
<u>7.</u>	Congregational	6
8.	Episcopalian	6
9.	Evangelical Free	8
10.	Four Square	4
<u>11.</u>	Franciscan	1
12.	Lutheran	1
13.	Methodist Church	3
14.	Nazarene	2
15.	Non-denominational	44
16.	Orthodox Presbyterian	2
17.	Pentecostal	1
18.	Presbyterian	3
19.	Presbyterian Church in America	1
20.	Salvation Army	2

21.	Southern Baptist	1
22.	Vineyard	2
23.	Wesleyan	4

II. What I Saw and Heard

1. Have you heard topics regarding dating or marriage taught in a church setting (worship services, youth group, church retreats, chapels, etc?)

		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes		.992	119
No		.008	1
Total Respondents			120

2. Have you attended a Christian conference or retreat with a theme specifically designed for either men or for women?

		Response Percent	Response Total
No, I have never attended a conference or retreat of this nature.		.479	56
Yes, in junior high		.222	26
Yes, in high school		.368	43
Yes, in college		.197	23
Yes, a church retreat		.137	16
Yes, a Christian camp/conference not associated with my local church		.077	9
Total Respondents			117

3. Please indicate any of the following concepts or phrases that you heard affirmed in the language, or teaching, of your church's youth ministry. In the adjacent columns please indicate what you agreed with at the time your church affirmed it, and what you think now. Leave any blank that don't apply.

	What My Church's Youth Ministry Affirmed...	I Agreed with My Church's Youth Ministry at the time...	What I Agree With Now...	Respondent Total
People should date and marry people of the same faith.	.88 (68)	.77 (59)	.82 (63)	77
A woman should be pursued.	.68 (40)	.53 (31)	.68 (40)	59
A man is the spiritual leader of the family.	.84 (57)	.57 (39)	.59 (40)	68

Husbands and wives are both called to be spiritual leaders of the family.	.55 (37)	.51 (34)	.91 (61)	67
A wife should submit to her husband.	.85 (56)	.47 (31)	.55 (36)	66
Husbands and wives should be submitted to each other.	.55 (40)	.53 (39)	.95 (69)	73
Women were created to help men.	.76 (22)	.45 (13)	.48 (14)	29
A husband has the final say in the big decisions (such as which church to attend, where to move, children's schools, etc.)	.77 (27)	.31 (11)	.31 (11)	35
A godly man should be a good steward of his body; exercising, eating right, and looking nice.	.57 (30)	.49 (26)	.85 (45)	53
A godly woman should be a good steward of her body; exercising, eating right, and looking nice.	.60 (34)	.49 (28)	.79 (45)	57
Godly men should be protectors.	.76 (53)	.60 (42)	.80 (56)	70
Godly women should be protectors.	.40 (18)	.38 (17)	.89 (40)	45
Godly women should be gentle.	.76 (48)	.59 (37)	.75 (47)	63
Godly men should be gentle.	.57 (31)	.52 (28)	.85 (46)	54
Godly men should be warriors.	.67 (30)	.51 (23)	.53 (24)	45
God wants men to be peacemakers.	.49 (25)	.39 (20)	.86 (44)	51
Women fall into sexual temptation easily.	.74 (14)	.47 (9)	.53 (10)	19
Women who don't dress modestly will cause men "to stumble" sexually.	.91 (62)	.59 (40)	.54 (37)	68
Men should be careful not to make a women "stumble" sexually.	.64 (30)	.53 (25)	.81 (38)	47
Men can't be trusted working in the church's childrens ministry.	.57 (8)	.43 (6)	.36 (5)	14
God wants women to be peacemakers.	.62 (31)	.46 (23)	.82 (41)	50
Women are more relational than men.	.79 (38)	.52 (25)	.38 (18)	48
People enjoy listening to men preach more than to women.	.78 (21)	.33 (9)	.26 (7)	27
The man should initiate and pay for the couple's dates.	.69 (34)	.47 (23)	.51 (25)	49
Men fall into sexual temptation easily.	.86 (56)	.68 (44)	.60 (39)	65
Total Respondents				81

4. With reference to the last section (question 12), if your current opinions have significantly shifted, please indicate the relationship/s with whom you most associate this shift.

		Response Percent	Response Total
Spouse		.098	5
Boyfriend		.294	15
Girlfriend		.255	13
Professor		.314	16
Mentor		.314	16
Friend—Male		.333	17
Friend--Female		.412	21
Father		.235	12
Mother		.275	14
Sister		.157	8
Brother		.137	7
Extended Family Member		.078	4
Employer		.098	5
Colleague		.078	4
Pastor		.294	15
Author		.176	9
Total Respondents			51

5. Please indicate the ideology which MOST CLOSELY relates to the belief of the following people. The choices provided may not match perfectly. Please choose the concept that most closely corresponds, or, if none of them are close, leave the column blank. (*Use the church experience which has had the most significant influence on your faith development.)

	Church.	Family.	Self.	Respondent Total
1. The husband is THE leader of the household. The husband makes ALL the decisions for the direction of the family. The wife does not have the same responsibility of leadership and therefore should serve her family and help her husband.	.85 (47)	.16 (9)	.09 (5)	55
2. The husband and the wife should WORK TOGETHER on decision making. Only in big decisions, or IN THE CASE OF A TIE, should the husband's opinion out-weigh the wife's opinion. The husband is the spiritual leader of the family and will therefore be held responsible for the life of the family before God.	.59 (59)	.61 (61)	.45 (45)	100

3. In the marriage relationship, God didn't intend there to be a leader. Both husband and wife should be EQUALLY SUBMITTED to each other and are EQUALLY HELD RESPONSIBLE for the life of their family. Both husband and wife are instructed to be spiritual leaders of the family.	.27 (21)	.44 (35)	.80 (63)	79
Total Respondents				115

6. Please mark all of the statements that apply. Leave any blank that don't apply.			
	In my church, I SAW women...	I believe women can...	Respondent Total
Give announcements from the pulpit.	.86 (98)	.90 (103)	114
Give missions reports from the pulpit.	.90 (104)	.89 (102)	115
Lead a corporate prayer from the pulpit.	.76 (84)	.92 (101)	110
Share her testimony from the pulpit.	.83 (96)	.90 (103)	115
Preach a sermon on a special occasion.	.61 (60)	.93 (92)	99
Preach a sermon as often as a man.	.14 (11)	.97 (74)	76
Preach a sermon if she is ordained in the denomination.	.48 (39)	.93 (75)	81
Get ordained.	.42 (35)	.95 (79)	83
Serve as a deacon.	.57 (51)	.93 (83)	89
Serve as an elder.	.57 (51)	.92 (82)	89
Lead women's ministries.	.97 (115)	.87 (103)	118
Teach Sunday school for children under the age of 13.	.98 (115)	.87 (102)	117
Volunteer in the youth ministries program.	.97 (114)	.87 (103)	118
Teach in the youth ministries program.	.91 (105)	.88 (101)	115
Serve as a youth pastor.	.53 (55)	.90 (93)	103
Volunteer in the college ministry.	.81 (93)	.88 (101)	115
Teach in the college ministry.	.70 (77)	.90 (99)	110
Serve as a college pastor.	.30 (27)	.93 (83)	89
Hold the office of associate pastor.	.27 (22)	.94 (77)	82
Hold the office of senior pastor.	.11 (8)	.93 (65)	70

Serve as an administrative assistant.	.91 (106)	.90 (104)	116
Plan retreats.	.87 (103)	.88 (104)	118
Lead the budget and finance committees.	.60 (68)	.90 (102)	113
Do hospital visitations.	.71 (81)	.88 (100)	114
Teach adult education classes.	.69 (77)	.88 (98)	112
Perform weddings.	.23 (16)	.99 (70)	71
Baptize.	.26 (20)	.96 (74)	77
Offer communion.	.50 (50)	.92 (92)	100
Perform funerals.	.20 (16)	.96 (76)	79
Serve as a worship pastor.	.63 (62)	.88 (86)	98
Sing in the choir.	.97 (114)	.86 (102)	118
Total Respondents			118

7. Please mark any influential Christian books you have read on the topics of dating, marriage, masculinity, femininity, or other gender-related topics.

		Response Percent	Response Total
Boy Meets Girl. Joshua Harris		.261	23
Captivating. John and Stasi Eldredge		.17	15
Community 101. Gilbert Bilezikian		.057	5
Every Man's Battle. Stephen Arterburn		.148	13
Every Woman's Battle. Stephen Arterburn		.125	11
Every Young Man's Battle. Stephen Arterburn		.08	7
Gender and Grace. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen.		.057	5
I Kissed a lot of Frogs: but the Prince Hasn't Come. Kathleen Hardaway		.0	0
I Kissed Dating Goodbye. Joshua Harris		.42	37
Lady in Waiting. Kendall and Kendall		.102	9
Men, Women, and the Church. Sarah Sumner		.023	2
Passion and Purity. Elisabeth Elliot		.193	17
Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. Piper and Grudem		.023	2
The Five Love Languages. Gary		.25	22

Chapman			
Wild at Heart. John Eldredge		.364	32
When God Writes Your Love Story. Ludy and Ludy		.148	13
Women, Authority, and the Bible. Alvera Mickelsen		.011	1
Total Respondents			88

Respondents Ages 23-25

I. Demographics.

1. Please indicate your age.

		Response Percent	Response Total
18-22		.0	0
23-25		1.00	70
Total Respondents			70

2. Please indicate your sex.

		Response Percent	Response Total
Male		.229	16
Female		.771	54
Total Respondents			70

3. Which word best describes the kind of high school you attended?

		Response Percent	Response Total
Public		.80	56
Christian		.157	11
Catholic		.029	2
Private, without faith affiliation		.043	3
Homeschool		.014	1
Total Respondents			70

4a. If you have ever been enrolled in a faith affiliated college or university, please indicate the name and location of the school/s below.

Total Respondents		55
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4b. If you have ever been enrolled in a faith affiliated college or university, please indicate the name and location of the school/s below. (Number of Respondents)

1.	Azusa Pacific University, California	7
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2.	Baylor University, Waco, Texas	1
3.	Boston University	1
4.	Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI	1
5.	Canisius College	1
6.	Colorado Christian University	1
7.	Concordia University, Irvine, CA	3
8.	Covenant Bible College	1
9.	Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa	1
10.	Gordon College	10
11.	Grove City College	1
12.	Houghton College, Houghton, NY	2
13.	Huntington College	1
14.	Loyola Marymount University	1
15.	Palm Beach Atlantic University	1
16.	Point Loma Nazarene University	4
17.	St. Olaf College	1
18.	Taylor University	1
18.	Westmont College	13
19.	Wheaton College	1
20.	William Jewell College	1

5a. If you attended church regularly (at least once a month) DURING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL YEARS, please indicate the denomination of the church/es below.

View Total Respondents		64
(skipped this question)		16

5b. If you attended church regularly (at least once a month) DURING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL YEARS, please indicate the denomination of the church/es below.

1.	American Baptist	1
2.	Anglican	1
3.	Armenian Presbyterian Church	1
4.	Assemblies of God	4
5.	Baptist	4
6.	Catholic	1

7.	Christian and Missionary Alliance	1
8.	Christian Reformed	1
9.	Covenant	1
10.	Evangelical Free	1
11.	Evangelical Lutheran Church of America	1
12.	Evangelical Presbyterian Church	1
13.	First Christian	1
14.	Independent Baptist	1
15.	Lutheran	1
16.	Mennonite	1
17.	Non-denominational	26
18.	Presbyterian	11
19.	Presbyterian USA	2
20.	United Brethren	1
21.	United Church of Christ	1

6a. If you attend/ed church regularly (at least once a month) DURING YOUR COLLEGE YEARS, please indicate the denomination of the church/es below.

View Total Respondents	65
(skipped this question)	35

II. What I Saw and Heard

1. Have you heard topics regarding dating or marriage taught in a church setting (worship services, youth group, church retreats, chapels, etc?)

		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes.		1.00	66
No.		.0	0
Total Respondents			66

2. Have you attended a Christian conference or retreat with a theme specifically designed for either men or for women?

		Response Percent	Response Total
No, I have never attended a conference or retreat of this nature.		.446	29

Yes, in junior high.		.154	10
Yes, in high school.		.246	16
Yes, in college.		.369	24
Yes, a church retreat.		.231	15
Yes, a Christian camp/conference not associated with my local church.		.185	12
Total Respondents			65

3. Please indicate any of the following concepts or phrases that you heard affirmed in the language, or teaching, of your church's youth ministry. In the adjacent columns please indicate what you agreed with at the time your church affirmed it, and what you think now. Leave any blank that don't apply.

	What My Church's Youth Ministry Affirmed...	I Agreed with My Church's Youth Ministry at the time...	What I Agree With Now...	Respondent Total
People should date and marry people of the same faith.	.89 (56)	.81 (51)	.73 (46)	63
A woman should be pursued.	.76 (37)	.59 (29)	.65 (32)	49
A man is the spiritual leader of the family.	.88 (51)	.60 (35)	.45 (26)	58
Husbands and wives are both called to be spiritual leaders of the family.	.40 (21)	.43 (23)	.96 (51)	53
A wife should submit to her husband.	.92 (44)	.56 (27)	.46 (22)	48
Husbands and wives should be submitted to each other.	.46 (26)	.46 (26)	.96 (54)	56
Women were created to help men.	.86 (24)	.39 (11)	.43 (12)	28
A husband has the final say in the big decisions (such as which church to attend, where to move, children's schools, etc.)	.85 (29)	.38 (13)	.18 (6)	34
A godly man should be a good steward of his body; exercising, eating right, and looking nice.	.55 (24)	.34 (15)	.84 (37)	44
A godly woman should be a good steward of her body; exercising, eating right, and looking nice.	.63 (29)	.37 (17)	.78 (36)	46
Godly men should be protectors.	.77 (37)	.56 (27)	.83 (40)	48
Godly women should be protectors.	.31 (8)	.31 (8)	.92 (24)	26
Godly women should be gentle.	.79 (38)	.50 (24)	.71 (34)	48
Godly men should be gentle.	.48 (16)	.33 (11)	.94 (31)	33
Godly men should be warriors.	.80 (28)	.37 (13)	.49 (17)	35

God wants men to be peacemakers.	.44 (18)	.39 (16)	.93 (38)	41
Women fall into sexual temptation easily.	.57 (13)	.26 (6)	.65 (15)	23
Women who don't dress modestly will cause men "to stumble" sexually.	.92 (49)	.64 (34)	.51 (27)	53
Men should be careful not to make a women "stumble" sexually.	.66 (23)	.34 (12)	.77 (27)	35
Men can't be trusted working in the church's childrens ministry.	.10 (4)	.25 (1)	.0 (0)	4
God wants women to be peacemakers.	.61 (28)	.48 (22)	.85 (39)	46
Women are more relational than men.	.61 (25)	.34 (14)	.54 (22)	41
People enjoy listening to men preach more than to women.	.69 (18)	.42 (11)	.35 (9)	26
The man should initiate and pay for the couple's dates.	.73 (24)	.45 (15)	.48 (16)	33
Men fall into sexual temptation easily.	.87 (45)	.60 (31)	.58 (30)	52
Total Respondents				64

4. With reference to the last section (question 12), if your current opinions have significantly shifted, please indicate the relationship/s with whom you most associate this shift.

		Response Percent	Response Total
Spouse		.341	14
Boyfriend		.195	8
Girlfriend		.049	2
Professor		.244	10
Mentor		.22	9
Friend—Male		.244	10
Friend—Female		.39	16
Father		.098	4
Mother		.195	8
Sister		.073	3
Brother		.024	1
Extended Family Member		.024	1
Employer		.073	3
Colleague		.195	8
Pastor		.22	9

Author		.244	10
Total Respondents			41
(skipped this question)			171

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5. Please indicate the level of expectation you have sensed from the following sources to find a spouse before graduating from college.

	No expectation				Pressured expectation	Response Average
Peers	.41 (26)	.12 (8)	.25 (16)	.16 (10)	.06 (4)	2.34
Family	.47 (30)	.19 (12)	.14 (9)	.17 (11)	.03 (2)	2.11
Spiritual mentors/youth pastors	.48 (30)	.22 (14)	.13 (8)	.08 (5)	.10 (6)	2.10
College/university employees	.55 (35)	.16 (10)	.12 (8)	.09 (6)	.08 (5)	2.00
Yourself	.31 (20)	.14 (9)	.27 (17)	.17 (11)	.11 (7)	2.63
Total Respondents						64

6. Please indicate the ideology which MOST CLOSELY relates to the belief of the following people. The choices provided may not match perfectly. Please choose the concept that most closely corresponds, or, if none of them are close, leave the column blank. (*Use the church experience which has had the most significant influence on your faith development.)

	Church	Family	Self	Respondent Total
1. The husband is THE leader of the household. The husband makes ALL the decisions for the direction of the family. The wife does not have the same responsibility of leadership and therefore should serve her family and help her husband.	.79 (22)	.21 (6)	.18 (5)	28
2. The husband and the wife should WORK TOGETHER on decision making. Only in big decisions, or IN THE CASE OF A TIE, should the husband's opinion outweigh the wife's opinion. The husband is the spiritual leader of the family and will therefore be held responsible for the life of the family before God.	.65 (36)	.62 (34)	.47 (26)	55
3. In the marriage relationship, God didn't intend there to be a leader. Both husband and wife should be EQUALLY SUBMITTED to each other and are EQUALLY HELD RESPONSIBLE for the life of their family. Both husband and wife are instructed to be spiritual leaders of the family.	.19 (9)	.43 (20)	.87 (41)	47
Total Respondents				62

7. Please mark all of the statements that apply. Leave any blank that don't apply.			
	In my church, I SAW women...	I believe women can...	Respondent Total
Give announcements from the pulpit.	.81 (51)	.87 (55)	63
Give missions reports from the pulpit.	.81 (51)	.87 (55)	63
Lead a corporate prayer from the pulpit.	.71 (44)	.87 (54)	62
Share her testimony from the pulpit.	.79 (50)	.86 (54)	63
Preach a sermon on a special occasion.	.66 (38)	.86 (50)	58
Preach a sermon as often as a man.	.10 (4)	.98 (39)	40
Preach a sermon if she is ordained in the denomination.	.40 (17)	.95 (40)	42
Get ordained.	.35 (16)	.96 (44)	46
Serve as a deacon.	.53 (28)	.94 (50)	53
Serve as an elder.	.46 (24)	.90 (47)	52
Lead women's ministries.	.95 (61)	.91 (58)	64
Teach Sunday school for children under the age of 13.	.97 (62)	.88 (56)	64
Volunteer in the youth ministries program.	.98 (63)	.88 (56)	64
Teach in the youth ministries program.	.88 (53)	.90 (54)	60
Serve as a youth pastor.	.49 (24)	.94 (46)	49
Volunteer in the college ministry.	.89 (57)	.86 (55)	64
Teach in the college ministry.	.68 (38)	.88 (49)	56
Serve as a college pastor.	.30 (13)	.98 (43)	44
Hold the office of associate pastor.	.37 (17)	.96 (44)	46
Hold the office of senior pastor.	.10 (4)	.92 (36)	39
Serve as an administrative assistant.	.95 (61)	.88 (56)	64
Plan retreats.	.95 (61)	.88 (56)	64
Lead the budget and finance committees.	.55 (33)	.87 (52)	60
Do hospital visitations.	.78 (45)	.91 (53)	58

Teach adult education classes.	.76 (45)	.90 (53)	59
Perform weddings.	.11 (5)	.98 (43)	44
Baptize.	.30 (14)	.96 (45)	47
Offer communion.	.47 (24)	.90 (46)	51
Perform funerals.	.12 (5)	.98 (42)	43
Serve as a worship pastor.	.55 (29)	.94 (50)	53
Sing in the choir.	.95 (61)	.88 (56)	64
Total Respondents			64
8. Please mark any influential Christian books you have read on the topics of dating, marriage, masculinity, femininity, or other gender-related topics.			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Boy Meets Girl. Joshua Harris		.308	16
Captivating. John and Stasi Eldredge		.173	9
Community 101. Gilbert Bilezikian		.0	0
Every Man's Battle. Stephen Arterburn		.192	10
Every Woman's Battle. Stephen Arterburn		.038	2
Every Young Man's Battle. Stephen Arterburn		.058	3
Gender and Grace. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen.		.038	2
I Kissed a lot of Frogs: but the Prince Hasn't Come. Kathleen Hardaway		.0	0
I Kissed Dating Goodbye. Joshua Harris		.50	26
Lady in Waiting. Kendall and Kendall		.173	9
Men, Women, and the Church. Sarah Sumner		.0	0
Passion and Purity. Elisabeth Elliot		.365	19
Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. Piper and Grudem		.096	5
The Five Love Languages. Gary Chapman		.577	30
Wild at Heart. John Eldredge		.50	26
When God Writes Your Love Story. Ludy and Ludy		.154	8
Women, Authority, and the Bible. Alvera Mickelsen		.038	2
Total Respondents			52

APPENDIX C

TOOLKIT FOR GENDER MUTUALITY

Contents

Gender Mutuality Booklist	140
Hermeneutics Worksheet	142
Cultural Guide to Paul's Ephesus	144
Guide to I Timothy 2:8-15	146
Sermon Notes. Mary and Martha: Discipleship for All	152
Sermon Notes. Parable of the Leaven: The Kingdom at Work	158
Egalitarian Men in the Evangelical Gender Debate	162

GENDER MUTUALITY BOOKLIST²⁰⁹

Good Starting Places for Inquiry
(Moderate level of difficulty, fairly accessible to a broad range of readers)

Sumner, Sarah. *Men, Women and the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership*. Intervarsity Press, 2003.

Sumner encourages readers to examine assumptions about women and men to see if they are biblical or not. Interprets the debate in evangelicalism and explains why the two sides collide. Presents a theology of women. Discussion questions follow each chapter.

Bilezikian, Gilbert. *Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as Community of Oneness*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985.

The focus of Community 101 is oneness and community in the Church. In his discussion of the oneness of male and female he explains the biblical mandate for mutuality and equality between the sexes as essential for community in the Church.

More Difficult, But Accessible to Focused Readers Who Are Interested In Gender Mutuality. Topics Are Streamlined Through Academic-Specialities.

Van Leeuwen, Mary Stewart. *Gender and Grace: Love, Work and Parenting in A Changing World*. Intervarsity Press, 1990.

Van Leeuwen approaches the evangelical gender debate from a sociological perspective, offering insight on the part that genes, culture and faith play in who we are and who we should become.

Bilezikian, Gilbert. *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says About a Woman's Place in Church and Family*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985.

This book looks at Scripture with a focused eye on creation, the fall and redemption. One of the primary questions Bilezikian addresses is, "What Was the Nature of Male/Female Relations in God's Original Design of Creation?"

Catherine and Richard Kroeger. *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking I Timothy 2:8-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1992.

²⁰⁹ There is an abundance of evangelical literature on the topic of gender mutuality. This list is not exhaustive. It is intended to introduce topics of gender mutuality and also to provide resources for quick discussion of biblical and theological questions. For more resources on gender mutuality, visit the bookstore at www.cbeinternational.org.

This book is an intense look at I Ti 2:8-15, a passage known for telling women to be silent and exhorting a woman not to have authority over a man. The Kroegers are masters of the ancient languages and of ancient Greek culture. Through art, language, religion, and cultural factors, they unveil the backdrop of 1 Ti.

Spencer, Aida. *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry*. Hendrickson Publishers, 1985.

The focus of Spencer's book is women in ministry. Spencer is a New Testament scholar and introduces helpful information for the study of Paul's writings. Also helpful are her appendices. She has included discussion questions for group study and a chapter for men written by her husband describing his experience as a pastor's husband.

Pierce, Ronald and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis (eds.). *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*. Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2005.

A response to Piper and Grudem's, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*. This anthology includes most of the scholarly contributors to the biblical equality discussion. The premise of this anthology is to present complementarity without hierarchy.

Most Intense: Books Written for Students of Theology, Pastors and Scholars.

Beck, James and Craig Blomberg (eds.). *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000.

With so many books available about the evangelical gender debate, Beck and Blomberg have pulled chapters from leading voices in both camps to describe their positions.

Keener, Craig. *Paul, Women, and Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992.

Keener, known for his work on the Intervarsity Press New Testament Commentary, has written an exceptionally detailed book, devoting each chapter to discussion of a different controversial passage of Scripture surrounding the gender debate. This is an important reference book for anyone engaged in this discussion.

Webb, William. *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*. Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2001.

Webb's book is a study of hermeneutics, exposing the varying approaches to Scripture. In many evangelical debates the Scripture texts exhorting slaves, women, and homosexuals are likened to each other. Webb uses the redemptive-movement hermeneutic to propose that these texts are not as alike as some evangelicals may believe.

HERMENEUTICS WORKSHEET²¹⁰

The job of separating the permanent (biblical) from the temporary (cultural) is important not only for cross-cultural missionaries, but for all Christians. Which of the specific practices and commands that appear in the New Testament are to apply at all times in all places? Which are merely temporary, needed at one particular time in one particular place but not necessarily applicable at other times and in other places?

To help us get a handle on the problem, try this self-exercise, adapted from material put together by Mont Smith, a former missionary in Ethiopia. The following practices and commands appear in the New Testament. In that sense they are all “scriptural.” The question is, which are meant to be permanent (P) and which are merely temporary (T)?

Think about each one, then check the appropriate column. Take your time and switch items from category to category until you are more or less satisfied:

Permanent	Temporary	
		1. Greet one another with a holy kiss. (Rom 16:16)
		2. Abstain from meat sacrificed to idols. (Acts 15:29)
		3. Be baptized. (Acts 2:38)
		4. A woman ought to have a veil on her head. (I Cor 11:10)
		5. Wash each others' feet. (Jn 13:14)
		6. Ordain by the “laying on of hands” (Acts 13:3)
		7. It is indecent for a woman to speak in an assembly. (I Cor 14:35)
		8. Have fixed hours of prayer. (Acts 3:1)
		9. Sing “songs, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Col 3:16)
		10. Abstain from eating blood. (Acts 15:29)
		11. Observe “festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths.” (Col 2:16)
		12. Observe the Lord's supper. (I Cor 11:24)
		13. Remember the poor. (Gal 2:10)
		14. Anoint the sick with oil. (Jas 5:14)
		15. Preach two by two. (Mk 6:7)
		16. If anyone will not work, let him not eat. (II Th 3:10)
		17. Eat what is set before you asking no questions. (I Cor 10:27)
		18. Prohibit women from wearing braided hair, gold or pearls (I Ti 2:9)
		19. Abstain from fornication. (Acts 15:29)
		20. Do not seek marriage. (I Cor 7:27)
		21. Be circumcised (Acts 15:5)

²¹⁰ This worksheet is provided with courtesy of Dr. Alice Mathews, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

		22. Drink communion from a single cup. (Mk 14:23)
		23. Lift your hands when praying. (I Ti 2:8)
		24. Meet in your homes for church. (Col 4:15)

CULTURAL GUIDE TO PAUL'S EPHEBUS

This is tool is a summary of Kroeger and Kroeger's book, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking I Timothy 2:8-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*.²¹¹

Culture of Ephesus

- The city of Ephesus, the fourth largest in the Roman Empire, lay on the western coast of modern Turkey. Ephesus was known as the gateway to Asia.
- Women were more liberated in Asia Minor. They enjoyed far greater freedom and exercised far more leadership than was the case in most other regions of the ancient world. Women were said to rule over men in the area around Ephesus, to subject them to humiliation and slavery.
- Ostentation in dress was frequently considered a sign of promiscuity in the ancient world.
- Ladies of fashion had one slave to arrange their hair while a second slave stood by with a whip to lash the unfortunate beautician in case a cowlick proved stubborn.

Religion of Ephesus

- Sacred prostitution was widely practiced in the temples of Asia Minor and also offered the worshiper a ritual union with the divine.
- Some men castrated themselves in the service of the mother goddesses, most notably Cybele and Artemis of Ephesus. Those who had sacrificed their manhood were said to have been transformed into women and thereafter were considered feminine.
- The primary deities in Asia Minor were female.
- The most famous shrine of the great mother goddess lay at Ephesus (Artemis.) Ephesus stood as a symbol of feminine supremacy in religion.
- Artemis controlled the heavenly bodies of the universe. She had dominion over childbirth, animal life and fertility.
- The citizens of Ephesus derived their feelings of security directly from their goddess (more than most cities), for in the political realm the city had seldom known independence. On two specific occasions the inhabitants documented that the safety of the city was due to the intervention of the goddess.
- There was a shrine to the Ephesian Artemis in every Greek city throughout the Mediterranean world and that in private devotion she was the most worshiped of all the gods.
- Artemis' temple was at Ephesus, where thousands of persons, both male and female, served the goddess. The temple served as a treasury for Asia Minor, the richest province in the Roman Empire. Countless pilgrims, attracted by the

²¹¹ Kroeger, C. and R. Kroeger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking I Timothy 2:8-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992.

sanctity of the goddess and the fame of her temple, poured wealth into the shrine and the city.

- Sexual union was used in the pagan mysteries to heighten or portray religious experience.
- Other influential goddesses in Ephesus: Cybele (the Mountain Mother) was worshiped through wild orgies in the mountains, caves and wilderness. Isis: became closely identified with Eve in Gnostic stories.
- Eve was identified with Isis. Ultimately she rose to the status of savior and sovereign of the universe.
- In many Gnostic systems, the God of the Old Testament, Creator of the world, is not the highest deity. Rather, He is the craftsman who made the universe. He comes off badly as the world was understood to inherently be evil.

Influential Ideas in Ephesus

- Gnosticism was prevalent in Ephesus. According to Gnostic thought, all matter was evil. Gnostics claimed that they had special secret knowledge. Gnostic writings contain material which appears pure nonsense. Sometimes there are long strings of repetitious nonsense syllables, sometimes there are riddles and paradoxes.
- Mortal women could serve as prime movers and mediators in religion. Women were assuming greater status than men as principal mediators of the gods. (The role of mediator and prophetess was sometimes assumed by Jewish women.)
- False teachers included both men and women. They were involved in telling stories that contradicted the Scriptures, most likely mythologizing Eve as the one who brings knowledge and meaningful life to Adam, acting as a god-figure. Most Gnostic accounts show Eve as pre-existing Adam.
- The social system was not founded on marriage. The mother was leader of the family. They claimed their descent from their mothers, rather than their fathers. They honored women more than men.
- Gnostics had an aversion to childbearing. One's physical body was considered evil and the soul was entrapped within the body as a dead body lies within a tomb. To procreate children was to scatter the divine particles still further and to entomb more human spirits in the flesh.

Judaism at Ephesus

- The Jewish population in Ephesus may have numbered as many as 75,000 persons. Many lamps bearing an inscribed menorah have been recovered.
- Rabbinic scholars were required to learn in silence. Silence was considered the duty of the learner. The phrase "silence and submission" is a Near Eastern formula implying willingness to heed and obey instruction from Rabbis.

OVERVIEW OF I TIMOTHY 2:8-15

“I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.” I Ti 2:8-15 (NIV)

Is it possible for this Scripture passage to have more than one meaning?

Throughout much of American history, Christians understood Col 3:22 to encourage slavery. (“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.”) This passage was taught in churches across the United States, giving biblical justification to what is now considered a horrific, anti-biblical, expression of oppression and injustice to an entire people group. The presupposition with which white Americans came to the Scriptures was twofold: first, that white humans were superior to humans with other skin tones, and second, that slavery was helpful to the common good of society. If we are unaware of the presuppositions that we come to Scripture with, we may, without even realizing it, invent conclusions, even widespread conclusions, that are contrary to the essence of the Gospel.

Another common way of approaching Scripture is to pick and choose the biblical principles that we like and therefore want to apply to our lives. For example, regularly the New Testament calls readers to “greet all God’s people with a holy kiss” (1 Th 5:26). Most 21st century churches have concluded that it is acceptable to disregard this instruction. Similarly, Jesus instructs his followers to wash the feet of others, saying, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.” (Jn 13:14.) If this instruction is followed in churches today, it is merely a symbolic and irregular practice, rather than a regular expression of obedience.

When we approach Scripture, it is essential that we are aware of the lens through which we are viewing the passage. Which passages do we disregard? When do we overlook an instruction because it was intended only for the original readers and when do we presume that a text was intended for all of time? How important do we think it is to understand the original culture that the Scripture was written in, and when do we read our own current culture into the passage? How do we define words? Do we defer to the range of meaning in their original language, or do we infer the images and meaning from our own language? Do we think it’s necessary to read the chapters or verses that precede and follow, or do we look at a passage without understanding the words spoken around it? These are important questions for Bible readers to examine, especially, when there is debate or ambiguity about a passage. When we understand the context of the passage, and acknowledge that “the word of God is alive and active,” (Heb. 4:12.) the very meaning that shaped believers hundreds of years ago, still transforms us today.

If taken completely literally, what does this passage mean?

Many Christians read I Ti 2:8-15 and assume that they are taking it literally; and, on this literal basis, will conclude that women shouldn't teach men. However, even the most diligent adherents to this passage are picking and choosing what they wish to obey. **Taken completely literally in American English in the 21st century, I Ti 2:8-15 communicates:**

- **Christian women should not have elaborate hairstyles.** (This would certainly include any use of hair dye—even highlights or recoloring gray hair and most certainly would include trendy haircuts.)
- **Christian women should not adorn themselves with gold or pearls.** (This goes so far as to eliminate even a gold wedding band or a classic strand of pearls.)
- **Christian women should not adorn themselves with expensive clothes.** (Though the word “expensive” is ambiguous, we could certainly conclude that most undergarments, shoes, swimwear, overcoats, designer labels and many fabrics should be eliminated from a Christian woman's wardrobe.)
- **A Christian woman should be adorned with “good deeds”**—a term most Christians would agree with despite the ambiguity of the terminology.
- **A Christian woman should learn in quietness.** Though there is some ambiguity here around *what* she should learn, presumably this would insist that a Christian woman should be a student of Scripture. (The implications of this instruction are that when she is studying, there should not be any interruptions of quiet, like those of children, spouses, music, phone calls, other responsibilities or tasks.)

- **A Christian woman should learn in full submission to the Scriptures.** (This implies that there should be nothing that competes for her attention to the study of Scripture. She should be “fully submitted” to her studies. She should be devoid of other distractions, maybe even responsibilities and relationships, that might make her only partially submitted to the study of Scripture.)
- **A Christian woman should not teach.** (The generality of this command would imply that she should not teach in the local church. Nor should she teach in the elementary school classroom. She should not teach in the home: the Bible or even pie-baking. She should not teach a man; she should not teach a woman; she should not teach a child. She should not teach.)
- **A Christian woman should not assume authority over a man.** (Though the term “man” is unclear, giving us no idea at which age a boy becomes a man, we can assume that a Christian woman should not be a part of any practice where she may have more power than a man. The term “authority” is also unclear. Would this term include any form of power or influence or just vocal power? Despite ambiguities, this admonition would seem to imply that a Christian woman should not be a professor, a structural engineer, a doctor, a law enforcement official, a judicial or legal official, or even a parental authority after her male child reaches a certain age.)
- **She must be silent.** (In an American translation of this passage, each verse seems to jump back and forth between implications for the church versus implications for all of life. This verse is no different. In the church, if this exhortation was taken to the full extent, this would imply that a woman must be silent from the moment she enters the church property—not greeting those around her, teaching children, singing in the choir, praying a corporate prayer, or giving directions to the restroom. The implications would be more severe if this passage was to be a general statement about her life, at home, at work, parenting, etc.)
- **Women are easily deceived.** (This passage, taken completely literally, would convey that all women—of every age, country, personality type, are easily deceived, and more so than men.)
- **In the beginning, woman was deceived and sinned (whether man even sinned at all is questionable from this passage.)** (This passage places an uneven level of blame on Eve; leaving room for the possibility that women only are to blame for the sin of humankind.)
- **Women will not be saved by grace from the blood of Jesus, rather, their salvation comes from having babies.** (And, women can potentially lose their salvation if after having babies, they do not continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety.)

Is there another possible meaning?

Most Christians, regardless of whether they support female clergy, will overlook some aspect of 1Ti 2:8-15 in its most literal form. What many Christians don’t know about this passage, however, is the background:

Paul wrote both 1 & 2 Timothy to his apprentice, Timothy, who was stationed in Ephesus. These letters are the record of instruction to Timothy in Paul’s absence. (It should be stated that many scholars don’t believe

that Paul wrote this set of letters. For the purpose of discussing this passage, we will assume that Paul did, in fact, author the letter.) The book of Ephesians parallels many of the same themes as 1&2 Timothy, as it is also a letter about the church at Ephesus, but uniquely, Ephesians is addressed to the whole church rather than just to one recipient, as is the case with 1 &2 Timothy.

Throughout these three letters, it is evident that **false teaching was a significant problem** in Ephesus. Presumably, this false teaching was spreading through the conversations of the females in the church, who were untrained in the Scriptures. I Ti 2:8-15 is embedded in a section of Paul's letter that specifically is addressing prayer in the local church. Following the section on prayer instruction for men, Paul gives guidelines for appropriate church conduct for the Ephesian women.

Paul starts with discussion of women's clothing. From the descriptions Paul gives, it is immediately evident that Paul is talking about a wealthy group of believers. Paul's recommendation that women dress modestly and with propriety is not for the same reason that many of our churches recommend it today—so that men may not stumble sexually; rather, this commendation echoes the Old Testament and the Gospels in its call to be mindful of the poor and to not live in prideful vanity. Paul goes on to say that a woman of God should be clothed in good deeds appropriate for those who profess to worship God. This call is consistent with the whole of Scripture, the theme of living out faith in order that others will glorify God in heaven. Paul's message is still relevant for the Church today.

The next sentence of Paul's letter is often placed in a new paragraph. In the original language there were not natural paragraph breaks. In fact, the original manuscripts offered only minor hints at punctuation, as punctuation was infrequently used in the Greek language.

In this next paragraph is one of the most liberating lines in Scripture: "A woman should learn in silence and full submission." I can't imagine what it would have been like to be an Ephesian woman and to hear this refreshing sentence, "You should learn!" The phrase "in silence and full submission" is reminiscent of Rabbinic teaching, in which Rabbinic scholars (who were all male) were called to learn in silence and full submission: submission to their teachers, to the Scriptures, to Yahweh! The only other time in Scripture that women are freely invited to learn is when Jesus says to Mary of Bethany, following the scorn of Martha at her choice to sit at the feet of the Rabbi Jesus, "You have chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from you." Paul, like Jesus, insists that the Ephesian women learn the Scriptures, a message that is a realistic answer to the kind of duress we know the church at Ephesus to be experiencing.

In many 21st century churches, the only verse in this paragraph that is adhered to is: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent." There is so much to say about this one line of Scripture! Let me remind you that this verse cannot be divorced from the one before it "A

woman should learn” and the one behind it, “For Adam was formed first.” This verse does not stand alone.

Let’s break it into parts:

- **“I do not permit a woman to teach.”** First of all, we know that Paul *did* permit women to teach. Lydia, Priscilla, Phoebe: these were all women who were leaders of house churches in the Greek world. We also know that women were the first proclaimers of the resurrected Christ. It is one of the most significant messages of the Christian faith!

Why would Paul ask that women not teach? If false prophesy was spreading through the gossip circles of women who hadn’t been taught in the Scriptures, it is most fitting that they don’t teach their ignorant and flawed understanding of Christianity to others—men, women, or children!

Often churches will say that a woman can “share” or can “teach”, but will tell her that she can’t “preach.” This is not what the Scripture says! The recommendation is that she does not “teach” because an unlearned teacher is dangerous for the Body of Believers. Additionally, this parallels one of Paul’s early recommendations in chapter three that deacons not “be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.”

- **“to have authority over a man”**—This word “authority” is very unique. Unlike the word (*exousia*) which means “leadership”, this word (*authentein*) is only used once in the entire Bible! The only way we have any idea what this word means is by looking at other ancient Greek writings. From these we learn that the word is almost always used in a violent take-over; it is a frequent word choice when talking about war. There is a very physical aspect of this word that cannot be dismissed. The word has violent connotations, like the English words: rape, assault, accost, or mug. Though the reason for Paul’s word choice is a bit unclear, we do know that many of the other gods in the Greek religion (none of which required total monotheism, like Jesus does) required physical acts of worship, often to the extent of including sexual intercourse, rape, killing and bodily dismemberment.

Following these strict instructions are three new verses which may seem unrelated, and even condemning. It sounds at first, like Paul is saying that a woman shouldn’t speak because Eve was created second and was the first to sin. Again, this would be inconsistent with the whole of Scripture, because this would imply that womens’ sin couldn’t be washed clean by the blood of Christ, and would be contradictory to Paul’s empowerment of other female house church leaders.

So what does this bizarre section mean? As was typical of Greek writing style, Paul uses an illustration to explain what he meant. The illustration is a reference to the temptation of Eve. When God told the human not to eat of the tree in the middle of the garden, the second human, called Eve, had not yet been created.

Though Adam and Eve stood side by side during the temptation, it was Eve who had not initially been educated about the fruit, who lived in ignorance and deception. Paul seems to be illustrating that women in the church at Ephesus should not teach because they have not been taught the wisdom of God, just like Eve who was deceived and then, as a result, sinned.

I do not know a Christian who would say that he or she agrees with the final verse of this passage, “**But women will be saved through childbearing**, if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety.” Essential to salvation is Jesus Christ. The predominant view on this verse is that it is a reference to one very specific “childbearing”: the bearing of Jesus; that even though woman was deceived into sin, she will be redeemed by the blood of Jesus. Though it was through woman that Satan’s deception bore fruit, it was also through woman that God’s redemption became incarnate.

This section of 1 Timothy 2 may seem fragmented, even after this explanation of the cultural context and that is perfectly fine! It isn’t an easy passage. Paul speaks with passion but his clarity is removed from our understanding in some places. Do not be nervous about the questions this passage may raise for you. This letter was nearly written two thousand years ago and has passed through many cultures and languages on its way into your hands. Nonetheless, the God you serve is the same: unchanged by time, and the message of His sacrifice for, and delight in, you remains the same whether this background information helps you or confuses you.

It is essential to come to Scripture honestly and to allow God to shape us. As you think about this passage, take the time you need to pray through it and meditate on it. There is pressure in our culture to come to quick and binding decisions about the sex roles. Try not to give into that pressure!

I hope that this overview of 1 Ti 2:8-15 will stir you to be mindful of Paul’s exhortation about financial stewardship and prideful vanity. I also hope that you will be refreshed by Paul’s encouragement for believers to learn, and that you will share his concern about teachers who haven’t studied well. I hope you will be touched by how the Spirit’s redemption of humankind began in body of a woman, the same kind of body that sin initially gained a foothold on that day in the garden. May the Lord bless you as you pursue the depth of His love for you, found even in the most difficult to understand passages. May you be rejuvenated by the freedom that lies in God’s redemption of this sinful world, and may you be so awestruck by God’s kindness that you, too, study His word in silence and full submission!

SERMON NOTES

MARY AND MARTHA: DISCIPLESHIP FOR ALL

“Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:38-42 RSV

Central Theme: All are welcome to be Jesus' disciples.

Relevance for Gender Mutuality: In a culture where the roles of women included care for the home and family and which excluded women from rabbinic learning, Jesus values discipleship above religious duty and offers women the choice to learn from the Rabbi. Jesus gave these women a new choice: the choice to sit at the feet of the Rabbi.

Organization: This sermon has one main point and two subpoints. The subpoints are organized in such a way that enables verse by verse exegesis. All personal narratives have been removed so that the speaker may choose her/his own. A practical application has also been removed so that the speaker may chose her/his own.

- I. Introduction to the story of Mary and Martha. (Luke 10:38-42) Main point: All are welcome to be Jesus' disciples.
 - a. Cultural factors to consider that correlate with the text:
 - i. Jewish tradition of hospitality
 1. Hospitality in the books of the law:
 - a. “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides among you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.” Lev. 19:33,34
 - b. “You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” Dt. 10:19

2. Some of the traditions of hospitality included washing the feet of guests and providing them with freshly baked bread.²¹²
 - ii. The two passages preceding the story of Mary and Martha regard hospitality. Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37) and the sending out of the 72 (Luke 10:1-28).
 - b. The city of Bethany was located two miles from Jerusalem.
 - c. The text says that it was “Martha’s home”.²¹³ It would have been unusual for a home to belong to a woman in this culture.²¹⁴
 - d. It was an honor to have Jesus in one’s home. Extrabiblical literature reiterates this, “Let their house be a meeting-house for the sages and sit amid the dust of their feet and drink in their words with thirst.”²¹⁵
- II. Point One: God values discipleship above religious duty
- a. The Religious Duties of A Woman
 - i. When Mary sat down at Jesus’ feet it would have been startling to the men in the room. Mary wasn’t doing the job of a godly woman, which in this culture included the duties of the home and caring for her guests.²¹⁶

²¹² King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 62.

²¹³ Lk 10:38

²¹⁴ It is interesting that the house was not called “Lazarus’ home,” as property was generally passed down to males in the family line (women were not landowners.) As King and Stager write, “According to Israel’s patrilineal system, only males could inherit property, because it was passed from father to son. ...If the father left no sons, the real estate was inherited in the first instance by his daughters, who were then obligated to marry within the circle that perpetuated the father’s name.” King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 50. Little information is provided about Martha. The text offers no hints about parents or a husband. Could Martha have been widowed? Had parents died, leaving Mary and Lazarus to Martha’s care? (The ages of these biblical figures are unknown. Were Mary and Lazarus left to Martha’s care, it may have added to the tragedy of Lazarus’ death later on, as the sisters may have been left without any male family member.)

²¹⁵ Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 59.

²¹⁶ “Martha’s indignation was perfectly understandable in light of her culture. A Jewish woman’s primary role was that of homemaker.” Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 59. “The domain of a woman’s activities was the household... Besides raising children,

- ii. Culturally she shouldn't have been sitting at the feet of a Rabbi, it showed disregard for the Mosaic law.²¹⁷
 - iii. Daily prayer of Jewish men: "Blessed be He who did not make me a Gentile; blessed be he who did not make me a woman; blessed be he who did not make me an uneducated man (or a slave)."²¹⁸
- b. The symbolic significance of sitting at the feet of the teacher.²¹⁹
- i. A position of sitting was reserved for learning, whereas banqueting happened at chairs or reclining.²²⁰

women were responsible for providing food and clothing. ...Among other chores, women built fires, made cheese and yogurt, milked the sheep and goats. They also ground grain into flour on the handmill, and condiments with mortar and pestle." King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 49, 50. Spencer says, "In *The Mishnah* a wife is required to grind flour, bake bread, wash clothes, cook food, nurse her child, make ready her husband's bed, oversee the Sabbath celebrations, and spin the wool." Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 52.

²¹⁷ Spencer says, "Jewish women were discouraged from having formal higher education in the law. They were not required to pursue religious training nor did they receive any merit in study. Furthermore, no one was required or encouraged to teach them. They were not admitted into Jewish schools. Even in the synagogue service they were not to 'study fully.' These exemptions were made for woman because she was to be primarily a homemaker and to be protected against unchastity. Consequently, women were often treated as persons who had little edification to share in conversation and who had little preparation to withstand the temptations of public life." Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 56-57. Kroeger and Evans add, "Mary seated herself at the feet of Jesus in the position of a learner. In Jewish tradition this was ordinarily not an option for women. A much-quoted proverb declared that it was better to give the Torah to be burned than to teach it to a woman." Kroeger and Evans, *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary*, 575.

²¹⁸ Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 56.

²¹⁹ Spencer says, "'To sit at someone's feet' in the United States conjures up memories of childhood, such as sitting around an adult or sitting at a campfire hearing stories. However, to sit at someone's feet for a first-century Jew (or other ancient person) would be an act to symbolize higher level formal education. Sitting at a rabbi's feet was a position typical of rabbinic students expressing respect to their rabbi. As Jose ben Joezer of Zeredah, who lived in ca. 160 BC, said, 'Let their house be a meeting-house for the Sages and sit amid the dust of their feet and drink in their words with thirst (m. 'Abot 1:4). Since teachers sat on a raised place in order to teach (as Jesus did in Lk 4:20-21), students had to sit on mats on the floor to be in lower position than their teacher.'" Spencer, 59

²²⁰ King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 62.

III. Point Two: Discipleship is for all people: women and men.

- a. The confrontation:
 - i. Martha approaches Jesus with frustration that Mary is not helping her prepare the meal. (Lk.10:40) Martha's frustration was justified in her culture. She had listened to the word of God and was obeying it. She was being a good woman in her social and religious culture.²²¹
 - ii. Jesus had the power to condemn Martha or to show her mercy.
 1. Men had power over women in this culture.
 - a. Divorce. Only husbands could divorce wives, not the other way around; women could be divorced without financial settlement.²²²
 - b. Adultery: women were usually blamed.²²³
 - c. If a woman spoke to a man on the street she was presumed to have had sex with him, unless proven otherwise.²²⁴
 - d. Women normally did not eat with men whenever there was a guest present nor did the women normally serve the men if a boy or slave were available.²²⁵
- b. Jesus responds with mercy.

²²¹ “Martha’s demand may be based as much on her discomfort at her sister’s unconventional behavior as on her need for assistance. We may suppose that there may also have been an element of jealousy. While she fulfilled the appropriate role of a traditional woman, her sister was seated with the male disciples. Mary was afforded an opportunity to learn that was denied to Martha.” Kroeger and Evans, *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary*, 575.

²²² King and Stager explain, “Owing to the importance of family life, divorce was presumably not a frequent occurrence. Although divorce was condoned, it was a serious matter and was not considered ordinary. The law of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 gives only to the husband, not the wife, the power to initiate divorce proceedings—and at any time and for any reason, without an obligation to provide for her support. He was required to give her a written document of divorce, lest she be accused of adultery upon remarriage, which was permitted to her.” King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 57.

²²³ King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 59,60

²²⁴ Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 54

²²⁵ Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 54.

- i. Both women were trying to listen to the words of God: Martha through the Holy Scripture and Mary by sitting at the feet of Jesus.
- ii. Jesus says, “It will not be taken away from her.” This response breaks the social norm. Jesus allows this woman to sit and learn from him, in the presence of men, while placing her religious and social duty aside.
- iii. Jesus says, “Mary has chosen what is better.”²²⁶ Before this encounter, there was never “a choice” for women to sit at the feet of a rabbi, or even in the presence of male guests during a meal. The wording Jesus selected invokes listening as a choice not just for Mary, but also for Martha, insinuating that Martha too had a choice.
- iv. In essence Jesus says to Martha, “I won’t grant your request to send Mary back to the kitchen.”²²⁷

Resources

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²²⁶ There is some debate that the sentence structure and grammatical conjugation in this verse does not necessarily make a comparison between the activities of Mary and Martha. In this case, Jesus would essentially say, “Mary has chosen what is good.” However, for those who insist that the grammatical structure is comparative, this parallel reiterates the significance of discipleship over religious duty. Whether or not the Greek implies comparison the essence is the same: Jesus encourages Mary’s choice in a culture where it would have been more likely that someone in His situation may have publicly shamed her for her disobedience to the traditions of faith.

²²⁷ This is similar to the Lk. 11:27,28 in which the woman who blesses Jesus’ mother. Next chapter (“While he was saying this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, ‘Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!’ But he said, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!’” Luke 11:27,28

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SERMON NOTES

PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN: THE KINGDOM AT WORK

And again he said, “To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.” Luke 13:20,21 RSV

- Central Theme: The Kingdom of God is at work.
- Relevance for Gender Mutuality: Jesus uses a female as a positive representation of God and caters the parable to a female audience.
- Organization: This is a three point sermon. This parable introduces a new way of thinking, rather than exhorting a specific action point. It is important that it is communicated that study of the parables is a process of “being transformed by the renewing of your mind so one can test and approve what God’s will is, His good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom. 12:1,2) If the orator wishes to provide an action point, she/he is free to do so, but one has not been included in these notes. All personal narratives have been removed so that the speaker may choose her/his own.
- I. Introduction to the Parables
 - a. When we come to Scripture, we look for who God is. What is God like?
 - b. The parables are metaphors and similes. They do not tell us everything about God or about God’s kingdom, but give us some hints. Metaphors are descriptors not instructions.
 - c. It’s important for one to come to these stories acknowledging that one doesn’t know everything about the Kingdom, even if he/she has heard the parable before.
 - II. Introduction to the Parable of the Leaven
 - a. What the original audience would have noticed as Jesus told the parable:
 - i. The Main Character is Female
 1. The parable would have been most relevant for the females in the audience. In this culture women were the ones who baked the bread. It is the females who would have been most likely to understand the story.²²⁸

²²⁸ King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 49-52 and Pierce and Groothuis, *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 128-130.

2. Rabbis wouldn't have told stories that were positive about women, and this story was a positive portrayal of a woman.
 3. The metaphor is of a female God-figure (whereas in the preceding chapter a man in the field is used metaphorically as the God-figure.)²²⁹
- ii. The symbol, leaven
1. Bread was symbolic for the Jewish people. They might be reminded of manna in the wilderness. They might also be reminded of the Jewish custom of hospitality in which bread was baked for all visitors out of remembrance for their years of being aliens in a foreign land.²³⁰
 2. Leaven was in every household. A necessity for life in Jewish culture. Women were the bread bakers in this culture.²³¹ Men would not have been participants in this practice, so this parable is specifically poignant for female listeners.²³²
 3. The amount of dough was absurd. This amount of dough would have weighed about 101 lbs. (Would have feed about 150 people.)²³³

²²⁹ Robert Capon says, "Let it simply be noted in passing that the surrogate for God in this parable is a woman. Set that down, along with Jesus' calling himself a mother hen, as evidence not only to paternalistic traditionalists but also to inclusive-language genderphobes that things have never been quite as good as the former, nor as bad as the latter seem to think. Indeed, the woman presented here by Jesus seems to possess, in the fullest possible measure, both masculinity and femininity. It may be stereotypically female work she's pictured as doing, but she does it with more than stereotypically male energy." Robert Capon, *Parables of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1985) 118.

²³⁰ King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 61, 62

²³¹ King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 65

²³² Kroeger and Evans write, "Kneading the dough requires vigorous use of the hands, persistence and sensitivity to the texture. Yeast, the leavening agent, is a living organism that does not always respond in precisely the same way. No two batches of dough are ever alike. Quantity of flour, temperature and environment must all be controlled by the skilled breakmaker for the yeast to raise a mass to many times its weight." Kroeger and Evans, *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary*, 578.

²³³ "Three measures (sata) is a bushel of flour, for crying out loud! That's 128 cups! That's 16 five-pound bags! And when you get done putting in the 42 or so cups of water you need to make it come together, you've got a little over 101 pounds of dough on your hands." Capon, *Parables of the Kingdom*, 118.

- III. Point One: The Kingdom of God starts small and grows
 - a. Not only was the leaven a small and unlikely parallel for the Kingdom of God, but the woman also, would have been an unlikely candidate for this metaphor. God and even Kingdom work may look different than we expect. For the Jews, they would have expected the Messiah to come in the form of earthly royalty, not from the womb of a peasant girl. They expected the movement of the Kingdom to be likened perhaps to war, not to leaven. This parable implies that God moves through small/unlikely things.

- IV. Point Two: The Kingdom of God works even when we can't see it
 - i. The Kingdom can't be seen at first, but steadily grows.²³⁴
 - 1. Sometimes faith grows over a long period of time, an idea referred to as "Process Conversion" rather than in one quick transformative experience.²³⁵

- V. Point Three: The Kingdom of God moves at its own pace
 - i. In American culture, if God does not move quickly it is presumed that something is wrong.
 - ii. Scriptural Examples:
 - 1. Israelites in the desert for 40 years.
 - 2. Creation 7 days
 - 3. Jesus 3 days to rise from the dead
 - 4. Jesus took awhile to get to Lazarus after he had died.
 - 5. Noah on the ark for 40 days.
 - 6. Jesus took time to wake up in the storm.
 - 7. Stopped to talk to, and heal, people on the way to the centurion's house.
 - 8. Jesus walked the earth 30 years before his ministry began.
 - iii. The audience was primarily Jewish. This means that as they listened to Jesus they were awaiting a Messiah who would swiftly redeem Israel and overthrow Roman rule. They were looking for a quick, fast-paced Messiah who would start a new kingdom quickly. This horrific slowness of this kingdom that Jesus is talking about, would have been controversial in this setting.

²³⁴ "...When you go back to the word *ekrypsen*, "hid," and spend some time on the obvious element of *mystery* it introduces, additional light begins to shine on both notes." Capon, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, 119.

²³⁵ Peace, Richard. *Conversion in the New Testament: Paul and the Twelve*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.

VI. Recap: The Kingdom of God is at work. The Kingdom of God moves through that which is small and unlikely. The Kingdom of God works even when we can't see it. The Kingdom of God moves at its own pace.

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EGALITARIAN MEN IN THE EVANGELICAL GENDER DEBATE

In the Fall of 2004, I found myself in a lecture hall surrounded by scholars and pastors interested in biblical equality. The majority of these conference participants were women, but peppered throughout the audience were a few significant male contributors. Throughout the four day conference, my curiosity was occupied with these men. Why did they choose to come to this conference? How did they become interested in this topic? What were they hoping to hear?

The more I thought about these men, the more my reflections led me to one consistent conclusion: If God intended that both men and women use their Spirit-given gifts for the ministry of the Church, then the gifts of both sexes must be edifying for both men and women. The more I thought about it, the more I came to realize that most of the public discourse about women in ministry has been spoken with a tone of defensiveness and has been designed for a female audience.

As a kind professor once said to me, my highest calling is to be a redemptive presence: to bring Christ to the world. There is nothing redemptive about defensiveness. In attempt to be a redemptive presence, I fashioned my questions into an interview project.

I wanted to talk with men who had risked their reputation for the empowerment of their female counterparts. I wanted to talk with men who had made public statements (written or spoken) supporting the full-inclusion of women in ministry. I wanted to hear about their life journeys. I wanted to hear unedited stories. I wanted to know about the relationships, the influences, and the ideas that had shaped them. I wanted to know about the motivations and the catalysts that had drawn them into the public discourse. I wanted

to know what observations they had made about the sexes when dialoguing about the topic. I wanted to know what their years of ministry had told them about how women should prepare for ministry and collegial relationships with their male counterparts. I wanted to learn about the specific gifts that they felt women bring to the church. I wanted to understand how these men who have become public heroes in some circles and despised opponents in others, these men who have risked their reputations to urge the Church to accept called women, these men who have spent countless hours and energy studying and defending the giftedness of a population to which they do not belong, how *they* benefit from female leadership.

In the pages following are transcriptions of conversations with this research sample. All of these conversations were casual: over the phone, in an office, or even at a dinner table. To each of the men, whose stories you are about to read, I offer my sincere thanks, not only for their participation in this project but for dedicating their lives to the possibility of my own professional ministry.

WALTER C. KAISER

Biographical Data: Walter Kaiser is the Colman M. Mockler distinguished professor of Old Testament and the former President of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, retired June 30, 2006. Kaiser has over twenty-five publications.

Interview Date: May 2005

Interviewer: How did you come to your philosophical and/or theological conclusions about women in church leadership?

Kaiser: It begins about 1970. I'm ministering to Officer's Christian Fellowship in Spring Canyon, Colorado. The director's wife, Lorraine Pettijohn said, "I have all of these men who report to me in the Sunday school. And, I found out that it's unbiblical. You've got to help me with 1 Ti 2, 1 Corinthians 11, and 1 Corinthians 14."

I said, "I cover the Old Testament. Why don't you ask a New Testament scholar?"

She said, "You teach hermeneutics, so I think you ought to help me."

I said, "Alright, I'll work on it. But, I'll tell you—I'm a traditionalist." So for the next two years I worked very hard on that. I came back to her in 1973 and said, "Lorraine, I have the answer for you."

She said, "Well, it's too late. I'm no longer at the church."

At any rate, as a result of that I got deeply involved in the literature. I read an enormous amount. I think the most impressive of all of those pieces was *God's Word to Women* by Katherine Bushnell²³⁶. That was the beginning.

In 1976, I was asked to teach Bible interpretation for Campus Crusade.²³⁷ It raised the issue of women as one of

²³⁶ Bushnell, *God's Word to Women*.

²³⁷ "Campus Crusade for Christ was founded in 1951 by Bill and Vonette Bright. Bill was studying late one night for a Greek exam while a student at Fuller Theological Seminary. He received a unique impression from God to invest his life in helping to reach the entire world, starting with college students. A

the problems. We used it as case study. That raised a lot of discussion amongst Campus Crusade. They had a lot of capable women who were not put over campus ministries because they were not men. I said, "You should put women over those ministries." They asked me if I would write an article for *World Wide Challenge*.²³⁸

Well, did I get the mail! One man said, "I'll give you 24 hours to answer these 13 pages of objections or I'm going to expose you to all 16000 Campus Crusade people." I wrote back, "Well, God bless you. I can't answer 13 pages in 24 hours. I don't think if I had 24 days I could do it. He was just going to have to go and expose me." (I think he figured out that this was something he probably shouldn't do at this time.)

Then, the next time I got involved in the discussion was about 1985 when there was a *Christianity Today* article. They called me and said, "We would like you to do 500 words on women and the Bible."

I said, "I should give my life for 500 words? I won't do it. Why would you only give me 500 words?"

They said, "Well, that's all the space we have left."

I said, "I won't do it," and hung up.

They called back the next night and said, "We're gonna give you 800 words." So, in a moment of weakness...

Again, a firestorm broke out. I had people in my denomination who came to confront me. I settled it down by going in front of them and saying, "You should be ashamed of yourselves. This is a denomination that says it prides itself on unity of essentials, and freedom on

professor friend suggests, "Campus Crusade for Christ" as the name of the new ministry. In the fall, Bill and his wife Vonette, start Campus Crusade for Christ at UCLA with the backing of a 24-hour prayer chain. A complete timeline of the Campus Crusade for Christ history can be found at www.billbright.com." www.ccci.org.

²³⁸ A bi-monthly publication of Campus Crusade for Christ.

nonessentials. Do you think this is an essential, like the atonement or deity of Christ?”

I got letters saying that said I denied inerrancy because I was for women. Many people say that I left the Trinity in 1991 because of my view of women. That’s not true but that was the story that got circulated.

Interviewer: It sounds like you have gotten a lot of opposition over the years.

Kaiser: Yeah, but you have to remember, these are people who have more heart than head on the thing. They are just don’t understand. They think that as soon as you argue positively for women in ministry that you are part of the radical feminist movement, which is a false assumption. It is rejection by association.

Interviewer: In light of the opposition, at a time where not much was being said about the topic, what motivated you to make these statements?

Kaiser: I just wanted to have an opportunity to explain the biblical text. My teachers had passed over it. Others were saying that Paul’s view of women was a cultural view of his time. I saw evangelicals trying to make our women pay for the excesses of the radical feminist movement. I didn’t think that was smart either. I thought it needed some speaking out.

Interviewer: You said that you spent two years really diving into the text. What kept you going?

Kaiser: I took it as a challenge, an opportunity to grow. I figured the question was to remain because I was facing a lot of things in the Old Testament which involved the same kind of issue: how do you separate what is principle from what is cultural?

Interviewer: How do you see men benefiting from women in church leadership?

Kaiser: It increases our available work force by more than fifty percent. The other thing is the gifts in the Bible aren’t gender coded: gifts of teaching, gifts of prophesying, gifts of preaching, gifts of helps, gifts of giving: The gifts are never gender coded. We lose out enormously on

individuals God has gifted, and we dampen their ability to serve.

Interviewer: What recommendations do you have for women who will be going into ministry and will encounter opposition for being female?

Kaiser: First of all: a sense of humor. There is an awful lot that you can do with a smile. Secondly, a sense of worth and well-being: *"I'm made in the image of God. And, I'm going to help you as much as I can you are a human being too, made in the image of God. We are both redeemed, so I expect you to help me as well."* Just be as nonchalant about it as you can. People may have issues, but "I don't have an issue, so I'm willing to work with you until you can see your way clear."

Keep reading and keep trying to find the data. There is always new biblical research coming along. Keep reading. Also, I wouldn't try to rub any ones' noses in it. Always hold back and wait for the right moment. Some of teaching is timing.

The last thing I would put there is a sense of call; a sense of God's call.

GILBERT BILEZIKIAN

- Biographical Data: Gilbert Bilezikian is credited by Bill Hybels as the one who inspired him to build the Willow Creek ministry. This French-born scholar has pastored in New York, taught at Wheaton College, and served as President of a college in Beirut, Lebanon. Among his significant contributions are *Community 101*²³⁹ and *Beyond Sex Roles*,²⁴⁰ two publications which address the evangelical gender discussion.
- Interview Date: June 29, 2005
- Interviewer: How did you arrive at your own theological and/or philosophical conclusions about women's involvement in the life of the church?
- Bilezikian: I was born raised in Paris. Very suddenly at Christmas time when I was five years old, my mother died. She was gone. And, I was raised without a mother. In fact, when my mother died, my father died emotionally.
- I knew no little girls my age, there were none in the neighborhood, and I went to a school of boys. I developed a youthful mystique about women, not understanding who they were. I would describe that as a time of cultural deprivation, in which there was no normal interaction for me between little girls and little boys.
- I think something happened through this to make me sensitive to a whole dimension of human life that I was missing.
- After a miserable and lonely childhood and youth, I became a believer. I experienced a complete turnaround. I dedicated my life to the service of God. My conversion was a very powerful experience of acceptance and the reality of love. I had a compulsion to return that love in service to God. But, I couldn't find any church where there was a commensurate devotion to God or a kind of church life that would express what I had gone through. I decided that I would be a lonely Christian. I started preparing for Christian service.

²³⁹ Bilezikian, *Community 101*.

²⁴⁰ Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*.

Through a strange set of circumstances, I found myself at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. That is where I got my training. It was there in the midst of my studies that I bumped into the scriptural passage where it said that Christ loved the church to the point of giving his life for her, and, that He sees her as being beautiful and vigorous and without any spots or wrinkle.²⁴¹ I felt very convicted. This church that I despised, Christ loved. I repented right there for my attitude toward the Church. That is when my lifelong study of the Church, as the way Christ sees it, started: a life-long study that isn't finished yet.

In any case I became a lover of the church. It was a second conversion. The more I studied about the church, the more I became aware of the discrepancy between the biblical norms for the church and the human practices of the church.

There are two ways to react to the church: First, the way of saying "The Church is all wrong, this is what the Bible says. I'm going to give it up." Or, second, to stay in the church and like a voice in the wilderness, preach the message of reform and renewal. I chose to do that.

I concentrated in my teaching and preaching on the church being the true community of God: the community of oneness! Because God *is* community, He creates community. He loves community. The more community there is the better it is. One of the basic tenets for the functioning of the community is to live out oneness.

Oneness is a relationship that excludes hierarchy. Hierarchy was a result of the fall. There is not a trace of hierarchy in Genesis 1 and 2. It emerges after the Fall when one becomes ruler and the other becomes subject. The great enemy of the authenticity of the church is hierarchy.

When there is stratification of layer, a layer of leaders, clergy and congregation, this is stratification that kills the church. When there is social or racial stratification, it kills the church. That kills the very notion of oneness, oneness

²⁴¹ Eph 5:25, 26

which is predicated on accepting each other on an equal basis and being mutually submitted, becoming reciprocal servants. When there is stratification on the basis of gender, again, there is no community.

My approach to the women issue does not come from feminist considerations. In fact, its exactly the opposite. Feminists are after equal rights and equal power. In the church we are after love which expresses itself in mutual servanthood and reciprocal submission. The agenda is totally the opposite of that feminism.

So really, I came upon the women issue by accident, because of my quest about the identity of the church. It was the definition about the identity of the church that made it compellingly clear to me that the church would function, but not be able to function properly, unless it was the community of oneness. God had intended to create a community of oneness, a community that Christ died to create.

Christ prayed just before he died, "Let them be one as we are one. The Father and I are one." He wanted the same kind of relationships that prevail in the Trinity to prevail among the community on earth. Those relationships are of givingness, self-givingness, deference to each other, respect and reverence. Unless that happens in the church, in the community that is the couple, then the community flakes. This is the reason for my endeavors.

Interviewer: What differences, with regard to gender, did you notice in your church experience in your move from France to the United States?

Bilezikian: In France, I knew a few churches, and they were small by reason of the circumstances. Protestantism had been persecuted. The Christians were a very small minority. When I came to the States, I didn't find that. I found that the practice of religion was a lot more formal and impersonal. It was essentially going to church on Sundays with a Bible. I found a form of cultural Christianity that had been tailored to the convenience of the participants, where half of the population had been ruled out of consideration. Only men were doing things. It was a men's club, except there was a greater number of women sitting down, being affected by the men's decisions. That was kind of jarring.

There was a greater sense of community in the little home churches in France than I found here. Here, I found a kind of spiritualized practice that was based on formulas, a few verses picked at random. I found the approach in the American church to be much more sterile than in the communities that were seeking their way in Europe at the time.

Interviewer: How do you think that men benefit from women's leadership in the church?

Bilezikian: The main benefit is the practice of biblical integrity, knowing that we are doing church in the way God wants us to do church. In the case of churches that open the door to women, for not only participation in salvation, but also in ministry, there is a chance of a vitality that is an expression of the Holy Spirit that is pleased when there is oneness. The Holy Spirit is the maker of oneness. Of course there are many other benefits.

There is the fact that the segment of the population of the church that is most aware, the most godly, the most involved with the affairs of the church, has the right to participate in the life of the church. And as such, the quality of the life of the church as community is enhanced. When the church is the man's world it is a very sorry thing. Men don't have the same approach to the need for compassion. Men do not have the same approach in the case of conflict; men become defensive and belligerent. It is the women who find ways to return to peace and to minimize the effects of differences and of conflict. I notice that churches that have elders deprived of women have a lot harder time resolving their relational and theological problems, than churches that have women elders. They make a difference. God knew what he was doing when he created both men and women. They are both necessary for the progress of the kingdom of God.

Interviewer: What trends have you noticed in your conversations with women and men regarding gender issues and the Church?

Bilezikian: The Christian men are either against the participation of women in ministry, or they are on the fence and not very convinced, but see the value of it. I see very few men who are absolutely committed to the equal involvement of

women on the basis of their spiritual gifts. I find that men have a hard time coming out of the bondage of their traditions or grappling with new ideas. I suspect that the reason for this difficulty has to do with the emotional efforts that they would have to make to see or live in a community where they would have to share power. They aren't used to that. Power is important to men, it defines them. Therefore, I find a lot of reluctance among men as to the full inclusion of women in the churches' ministries.

In Christian women (who are exposed to the message of involvement on an equal basis in the ministries of the church), I find two reactions. One is a defensive reaction of rejection, because of very heavy conditioning from the beginning of their lives. Since they were babies they lived in a male world. They have been put down as women as being different, inferior, not capable of doing this and doing that. They have been relegated to the menial tasks. When they are told that this is the way God wants it, from the misuse of these passages in the Bible, I suppose this kind of mentality results in an incurable, life-long tendency to view oneself as a second rate citizen of the kingdom. They think its fine; its the way they want it; its the way they are used to it, they feel comfortable in that role. Its fine for them, that's what they say. *"I don't aspire to much."* My question to them, in this state of relatively-passive subservience is, "Do you exercise the gifts that God has entrusted to you for the benefits of the kingdom?" The answer is often *"No; I could do a lot more. I don't feel I'm doing my best. But that's the way it is. That's the way God wants it."*

Fortunately, with a lot of other women, they realize that the vision of the church by Christ, the community of oneness, has been betrayed by centuries of institutional misreading of the Scriptures. They want to take a fresh look at what the scripture says. Many of them are involved in studying this issue. Their number is increasing. There are women rising bold and gifted, who say, "I want to take my place in the economy of the kingdom of God." To me that's very comforting. That's what it's all about.

I only wish that men who have put women down for so long because of their rulership principle that came from the Fall, I wish men went out of their way to help women, and

to honor them, and to give them the place that is due to them in working out of the affairs of the Kingdom of God.

Interviewer: I work with college women, many of whom are thinking about professional ministry or are currently involved in lay ministry. What recommendations do you have for the encouragement and preparation of these women for their ministry endeavors?

Bilezikian: Train them to view themselves as Children of God; not as twice subordinate children of God. Engage them in a study of the Scriptures, teaching what God intended to do at Creation on the basis of Genesis one and two; what the devil, who destroys the work of God, intended to do at the fall; with Genesis three; and then, the whole old covenant--God's effort to rectify the problem through the law and the prophets and it never works; and then the New testament, with the third part of your study with the pattern for male-female relationships in the New Testament; and the place for females in the economy of God. It's a study that can be done in a day, or a week, or a month, but it would give a solid foundation for the lives of those women

People ask questions like, *Why are you doing that? Who gives you the right to do so?* I think women should not stoop to their level and answer. Women should seize those challenges as opportunities for educating people in the basics of community. In any case, the ultimate answer is "My calling from the Bible is to exercise my gifts, so that I will not be held accountable for failure before God."

Interviewer: Do you have any additional closing thoughts?

Bilezikian: My conclusion is that men and women in the church don't feel at ease in hierarchical relationships. They don't feel at ease in a hierarchical relationship in the family. They know that it doesn't work. And they know that when there are decisions, they make them together and when there is a decision in deadlock, it is the person who is really qualified in that area who makes the final decision. To force a hierarchical framework, on a marriage or on a church community that works properly, is to sabotage those institutions.

RICHARD KROEGER

Biographical Data: Kroeger served as a Presbyterian pastor for over fifty years. He co-authored *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking I Timothy 2:8-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence*.²⁴² Kroeger earned his Doctor of Ministry degree at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

Interview Date: January 2005

Interviewer: How did you arrive at your own theological conclusions regarding women's roles in the church?

Kroeger: My mother and father came from well-to-do families. My father came from a Saint Louis family which practically ran St. Louis. They were anti-evangelical.

My mother came from a wealthy New York family that never went to church and thought they were Episcopalian. My mother and her debutant friends from New York went up to Northfield, Massachusetts to listen to Dwight L. Moody and got converted. My mother, when my father wasn't around, would drag us in off the street and we had Bible study and prayer, even on Saturday morning. And, in Westchester County there were very few good, evangelical churches.

This was the hey-day of the modernist, fundamentalist controversy. Naturally we were looking for evangelical churches, but there weren't many. And when there were, they were quite small. Somehow we got to know some of the Plymouth Brethren people in Westchester County and used to go to some of their home Bible studies.

I noticed over the years in the Plymouth Brethren church that the males could do anything. They had their upper room ceremony, their communion on Sunday morning. They would have some high school kid get up and start expounding the Scriptures, but the women never said a word. It soon became apparent that women weren't allowed to do anything but take care of the children, and

²⁴² Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking I Timothy 2:8-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence*.

provide the meals for the assembly. I didn't think a lot about it in those days. I was young.

In the process of the war and the depression a lot of changes took place. After the war, I couldn't start back at Yale yet because Spring semester had already started. So I went down to The Stonybrook School to see if they would give me a job. I mowed the whole campus, including the football field every week, with a great big mower.

In the process I got to know the Gaebelin family, and the Gaebelin girls, Gretchen (who later became Cathie's good friend at Bryn Mawr College and was one of the founders of Christians for Biblical Equality) and Doty.

When I got back to Yale, some Intervarsity ladies came and said they'd like to start a campus ministry there. I said, "Cathie and I will help you start it." And we did. Many of the wonderful Bible studies Intervarsity used were written by women. At Yale, our staff people were basically women. When we'd go to conferences, or to Urbana, they'd lead the men. So, I kept meeting these very bright Christian women.

More and more we got into this debate. In the Presbyterian church they began ordaining women. (It was obvious that the fundamentalists were not going to ordain women, based on what Paul said.) At Fuller, they didn't want my sister in law to become a pastor, so they gave her a S.T.V, instead of a B.D.--which, we all argued. (Fuller didn't have any women teachers until a little later.)

When we started studying Pauline passages, we recognized that they were full of problems. For example, in 1 Corinthians 11, he tells the women that they can pray and prophesy as long as they have their head-covering: not a veil, but a shawl over their heads, which was the way the women all dressed, it's what allowed them to go out into public. Then, in chapter fourteen he tells quite a lot of them to be quiet: silent in church. They're not allowed to speak. How could they pray and prophesy if they can't speak? Something was wrong here. (Most biblical scholars believe those verses in chapters 14 are non-Pauline interpolations.) We (Cathie and I) worked on the

problem.²⁴³ If the fundamentalists build their case on those sayings of Paul as they want to do, then they are in trouble

²⁴³ Richard Kroeger elaborates, “Paul was not telling them that they couldn’t speak, he was telling them to be quiet. They were upsetting the worship services. Let them ask their husbands at home, instead of yelling down from the balcony, about “what’s that preacher saying?” The women in Paul’s day were married when they were teenagers to old men who never spoke to them. They just had children by them and they were in the harem and never got out; except once a year when they went out onto the mountains to worship Dionysus and went crazy with all kinds of the sacred cries of women and so forth.

When they became Christians they didn’t know you were supposed to be quiet, so they made a lot of noise. But that’s not saying they couldn’t teach. How could Paul say a woman couldn’t teach when he’s got Priscilla teaching Apollos right under his nose? Later Thecla comes along and many other women teachers. He has all kinds of women coworkers. In Romans 16, one is actually called “an apostle.” How could you spread the gospel if you couldn’t talk or speak? Cathie is a classicist and she has found more meanings for *kephale*. She found it could mean “source of.” Adam was the “source of” Eve, not the other way around. The women teachers of Paul were teaching heresy. They were probably talking to Gnostics. A number of people don’t think there were Gnostics in the first century. To me that’s nonsense. The devil, the serpent was the first Gnostic—he told Adam and Eve, “You eat this fruit and you’ll become a knower, like god. You’ll know good and evil.” Well, that’s what Gnostics ever since have believed, including new age Gnostics--teaching people you just believe that you have a spark of the divine in you, you’ll become god, and do anything you want. And we’ve always had Gnostics in every age, they may not have been highly organized in the first century, but they certainly were by the second century. And these women were probably teaching that they were the source of man. It’s interesting that Paul immediately blasts Eve, saying “she was guilty of being deceived, not the man.” [In a tone of rebuttal:] *Well, Paul, first of all, these guys like Grudem say a woman can prophesy, but she can’t teach. Well, prophesying is the highest form of teaching. You get it straight from God and you teach somebody, but the teachings of God’s word is what prophecies are.*

Since Eve was a heroine of the Gnostics, ‘cause she followed up the god who made matter, and Gnostics believe only spirit is good and all matter is evil--therefore, Eve was a heroine. Paul was using these arguments off the top of his head, to say silence the women. *What was worse to be deceived or to sin with your eyes wide open the way Adam did?* He got it straight from God, “You shall not eat of this fruit.” Whereas, Eve got it secondhand from Adam. She took what Adam did not have to take, and by the way, in the Hebrew “he was right there with her,” which a lot of English translations leave out. Adam did not have to sin, but he went ahead and did it anyway. *More guilty really, Paul?...The one who is deceived or the one who sins deliberately?* Paul is just trying to pile on these arguments the way he does in I Corinthians. Some of them aren’t always the most logical; but he is dealing against heretical women teachers.

because they don't hold up. They need to take the rest of Paul. He treats men and women equally. He recognizes they all have the same gifts. So, the more Cathie got into it, the more I got into it. We developed a course "Women in the Bible," that we've taught all over the world. We've taught it at international meetings of Christians for Biblical Equality, one in Austria one in Norway. And, it just doesn't seem to make any sense, what these so called, "complementarians" teach about women.

Interviewer: What encouragements do you have for women who are going into ministry?

Kroeger: If you come in as a woman associate pastor to a male pastor, you have to do everything you can to find out about him. What kind of a track record does he have for working with women? You have to find out whether he really believes in women in ministry, or if you are just one more church secretary, one more Sunday school teacher, or maybe a Christian education director. In his opinion, as a pastor, is he going to let you be a pastor? Is he going to help you learn how to grow and be a better pastor?

In our era, Fuller didn't have any pastoral counseling department that amounted to anything. We had to learn all kinds of things on the job. I didn't get any instruction about how to do funerals, weddings, or baptisms. I had to learn it on my own with a lot of books.

Because women in ministry have a shorter history, its even more of an issue to get a good solid seminary education. Learn as much as you possibly can about various ways of doing ministry.

BILL SPENCER

Biographical Data: Spencer is a professor of Theology and the Arts at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He has authored nine books. Spencer is currently the editor of the *Priscilla Papers*. He is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church.

Interview Date: June 22, 2005

Interviewer: How did you arrive at your own theological conclusions about women's involvement in the life of the church?

Spencer: I had an older sister (she was five years older than I was), and she was full of life, extremely creative, kind, and very sweet. As many girls who are five years older than their little brothers, she sort of raised me (along with my mom). I remember she used to tell me stories at night. I'd crawl into her bed and she would tell me these stories.

She died when she was eleven in a very bizarre, summer vacation accident. She drowned in a public pool.

So, I had these two sides, my sister being very bright (my dad and my sister were intellectual) and my mother who was feeling-oriented. So I knew the two sides of women.

I never bought into the Mars and Venus thing because I know that women tend to be very cerebral. I find that women are very intellectual. There's a whole mythology about the way men and women are. People think that women are all feeling and that men are all intellect, [laughter] but there's a lot of the other way around too. A lot of things that guys do are emotionally driven. A lot of things women do, they reason out, and not necessarily the feeling and gut level thing. I don't know how that mythology got turned around.

Anyway, as a child I was brought up in an extremely fundamentalist church, ferociously so. The question of women's leadership, formally, wasn't really even a factor; there wasn't even a discussion going on, you have to remember this was the 40s and 50s. Women were active on the mission field. There was profound respect for women missionaries, for women who were active in the church; but there was no discussion... It never entered anybody's mind! At the same time that there wasn't discussion about

women, there wasn't discussion about integration of the church either.

I remember one defining moment as a child, there was a black family that came to this totally Anglo church I was in. The deacons went over to them and asked them if they would be more comfortable at "their" church across town. I was a very observant child and I thought, "This doesn't feel right. Why would they do that?"

At any rate, it was really in college that a lot of things started to not look right to me: economic disparity, racial disparity... Of course when I was in college was when Martin Luther King was killed. The riots were going on. And, I was really coming to faith in a way I had never done before.

When the question of women in leadership was finally being broached, it was in the context of reevaluating everything. As racial equality was taking place, gender equality just seemed to happen at the same time. One made as much sense as the other.

When Aida and I started going together in college, she was from a non-United States background. She was a sociology major and I was an English major. One day, the topic of people pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps came up. She explained to me that she didn't think that was really feasible through the system, set up the way it was. I heard what she said, and thought, *you're right; it doesn't make any sense*. I realized there was a lot of disjuncture. She told me one reason that she fell in love with me was because she didn't have to argue on the point, it just made sense to me.

When I got to seminary, I just assumed that because women were gifted that they could have leadership. I was telling Aida about all the exciting things I was doing and she said, "Do women come to seminary?" We had this one nurse there, so I said "sure, sure." So, Aida came.

That was the moment that some of the complementarian guys pointed out the passage to her about women not being able to speak. So, she and I went over to Firestone Library there at Princeton. We went to the room with all the Jewish material: the Midrashes, the Babylonian Talmud,

everything! We hunted down what it meant for women to be free from precepts ordered by time. We reasoned out the whole thing and bit by bit we realized that the injunctions were cultural. Our studies became the basis for a paper she wrote for class. Eventually, that paper became “Eve at Ephesus,”²⁴⁴ her first article, which became a chapter in *Beyond the Curse*.²⁴⁵

Now, when I hold a position, I *hold* a position. I don’t compromise on it. I’ll listen to reason and I’ll examine parts of it, but I don’t tend to let one go because the group I’m in doesn’t particularly like it, or this famous person doesn’t want it, or the spirit of the ages is moving in another direction. It doesn’t matter to me: if I think it’s true I’ll hang onto it and support it.

After that, it was a natural progression. We studied in seminary and then I got a job as a college chaplain and my wife started working at a prison. Then we got an opportunity for her to do a parallel chaplaincy. The presbytery called us up and asked us if we both wanted to be ordained. Since we had resolved the women’s ordination issue, she got ordained. We were the first couple ordained in our presbytery. (That was back in 1973.) One time we did a dual sermon in the church. This guy came up to me right after we got ordained and said, “How dare you let your wife get up and speak.” (We had a lot of that stuff back in the early days.) I think that because our conscience and the way God prompts our spirit we get a gut level feeling of what’s right. And bit by bit intellectually you realize why it’s right. So I always had the predilection that it was right. And, then, as I studied it I realized why it was right.

The other thing: now that I have gotten so much study in, and not just on this issue but on many issues, I realize that the Bible is extremely subtle. We all read it as if it were simplistic. But, the God who made the universe, made something extremely complex—down to the molecular level, subatomic level, the quark level, it’s just an

²⁴⁴ Aida Besancon Spencer, “Eve at Ephesus” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 17 (Fall 1974) 215-222.

²⁴⁵ Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*.

extremely complex universe. Why would we think that God's specific revelation would be simplistic? Why wouldn't it be as subtle as the universe God built around us? There is more to everything than meets the eye.

The other thing is that there is a disjuncture in Paul's practice and his teaching. If you go for the simplistic, the complementarian side will always contend that the egalitarian side twists the scriptures. On the other hand, the egalitarian side will contend that the complementarian side will mute the true identifications of Paul's coworkers.

In this next issue of the *Priscilla Papers*, you'll notice the third essay by Christianne Carlson-Thies. She's developing a study called, "Hermeneutics in Pink and Blue."²⁴⁶ It's a brilliant study! What she is contending is that when complementarians read the scriptures, they read it one way for men and another way for women. So they'll actually do what they accuse the egalitarians of doing. They will read it simply for women and complexly for men. This is how they eliminate, for example, the joint command, in Genesis 1, for both to rule. They'll read that complexly. They'll read the command to women very simply, as though it's just there for face value. For men it is not there for face value only. Scripture is very subtle. You have to read it with the same sophistication with which you study the world. The other thing is that on the last day I would rather stand before God and say, "Lord, I empowered one hundred percent, of the church, rather than to say I managed to keep fifty percent from working."

When we first married, there were no openings for women in ministry in 1972. I was in chaplaincy at Ryder University in New Jersey. Aida taught English as a second language at Trenton State Prison, a maximum security prison. I had a counterpart chaplain at Trenton State College. Unbeknownst to all of us, he was fooling around with the female students.

That came to the floor, and the President of this state school, who was actually a Christian, fired the chaplain. It came out that this was the second male chaplain who had

²⁴⁶ Christianne Carlson-Thies, "Hermeneutics in Pink and Blue," *Priscilla Papers* 16, no.4 (Fall 2002) 3.

been fooling around with the students. The President of the school was furious. As a Christian, he wanted Christian ministry being done on campus. So here, he had invited this ministry group on campus and they had fielded two loser chaplains in a row and trashed the name of Christ. He gave an ultimatum to the group "I don't think you are capable of picking a chaplain. I'm going to kick you off campus and get another group." He was the president and could do whatever he wanted.

I said, "I know how you can save this ministry. You've gotta have a new paradigm. Why don't you put a woman in? Then you can guarantee that she won't fool around with the female students." Aida became the chaplain at Trenton State. That was her first ministry position. We kept the relationship with the prison. We would take teams of students in there to do worship services. But, that got her going in ministry.

In 1974, we were invited to New York to set-up a community for seminarians to teach basic Bible and seminary courses. That's how we ended up becoming seminary professors. We were called jointly, so we both took adjunct positions with New York seminary.

Interviewer: What advice would you give to women who are going into ministry?

Spencer: First of all, things go better when you are in a support group. That's what CBE (Christians for Biblical Equality) is all about. That's what the churches that are hospitable to women are all about. Don't try to do it on your own. Go to the professors who are hospitable to your position.

I talk to so many women who don't have a good experience in seminary because they go to the professors who are complementarians and always feel put down in class. Then they say the seminary is not supportive of women. So, I always ask, "Did you take any of the egalitarian professors? ...Because we have tons of them. We have many professors here are supportive of women."

I talked to a woman about three weeks ago who took all of her courses with these professors who don't believe in the ordination of women. She said she got very little out of the classes. I don't see any point in being an isolated individual. The first thing I would say is seek a support

group or create a support group because there is strength in numbers. Christianity at its core is communal. Of course the key passage in all of this is John 17:²⁴⁷ (Jesus' prayer for us.) That we would be united just as the Father in heaven is united. The great Shema shows this also, "Hear, oh Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord our God is united (one)," ²⁴⁸ that plurality, and singularity with God. That's the way the Christian body looks. Jesus sent everybody out two by two. We should always be doing everything in community.

So the first thing is, join a group, form a group, take hospitable professors. And, get in a hospitable church that's going to use your gifts. Be in a climate you can grow in. You don't want to take the wrong flowers and put them in the wrong environment, because they'll just wither and die.

Secondly, you want to become more and more Christ-like. I decided it was adversarial to debate with other Christians. So I never debate. I've had many discussions. We did a discussion on equal marriage out of ETS (Eastern Theological Seminary). But, we laid down the rules right away, and we said we will not be in a debate. We will only be in discussion. We explained to the audience, "We are here for a discussion. We are not here to have our marriage examined after thirty three years. We don't care about your opinion of it, the only opinion we care about is God's. We are not laying it out for you to examine. We are simply having a dialogue with this complementarian couple." And we had a great time. That is the second thing: Don't fight. It doesn't get anyone anywhere. Both sides get defensive. Only discuss, never battle. As you live a more Christ-like life, it's who you are that matters.

It takes an extremely self-assured male to allow space for women. It's really the guys who aren't sure of their masculinity, maybe they never did a sport, or their dads weren't affirming to them, or they haven't chopped enough wood, or their wives don't treat them nicely, or maybe they can never attract anybody, or who knows what... They are

²⁴⁷ Jn 17:11

²⁴⁸ Deut 6:4,5

the ones who are hanging on, holding women down. Guys who are really sure of themselves, can really relax and be in equal leadership, or work for women, because it's not a threat.

I think it's the same thing for women. Women who are really assured of their own femininity and really assured of their own faith, can be themselves and through their winning way put to lie any accusations made to them. Always have a reason for the hope that is in you.

Do your homework. We know their side as well as they do. The more you know, the more empowered that you are. Study and show yourself approved.

The final thing is that God is going to do what is right. You have to be willing to follow God wherever God leads. But it's going to come out healthy and life-affirming, because Jesus came to teach life and life more abundantly. The Gospel is healthy and life-enhancing. It follows the rules that God first laid down.

Interviewer: How do men benefit from the leadership of female pastors?

Spencer: From my mom and sister, I had a lot of profound love and respect for women. I've always loved women. For guys who have had a healthy relationship with their moms, it's not such an unusual thing for a mother of the church to be in leadership.

Secondly, there is an empathy that a called pastor will bring that transcends gender. I don't think it's confined to the sex. I remember various people, when we lost our parents. I can remember tender moments with our pastor of evangelism (who is a male) and our pastor of community (a female) who was very tender and very understanding.

In addition to that, I've noticed that women will pay a lot of attention to detail. That doesn't mean that there aren't guys who pay attention to detail, but guys tend to go more for the quick kill, like if you are in a meeting, women will examine every point of it. Guys tend to move to closure quicker. Sometimes when you're there agonizing, women will spend more time with you than men will. Now this is just anecdotal; I won't defend it with my life; but it is something I have observed.

And I think because women have suffered for so long and been held down, and had the experience of somehow paying a price for her intellect or being counter-cultural, that women bring those wounds. The most powerful pastoring can be done by the wounded healer, by someone who has been there and suffered and therefore can understand pain and suffering.

Pain and suffering are individualized. What's pain for you will not necessarily be pain for me, and what's pain for me will not necessarily be pain for you. If you suffer, you can recognize pain. I think a lot of women can recognize pain. They make great caretakers in a church setting.

Once you give them the opportunity, women can preach powerfully. There's no facet of leadership in the church that I haven't seen our pastor do with great skill. My wife is also an excellent preacher.

to follow God wherever God leads. But it's always going to come out healthy and life-affirming, because Jesus came to teach life, and Life more abundantly. So I think you always see the Gospel as something very healthy and life-enhancing. It follows along with the rules that God first laid down.

GREG CARMER

Biographical Data: Greg Carmer is the Dean of Chapel at Gordon College. Carmer holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in Theology from Boston College.

Interview Date: May 24, 2005

Interviewer: How did you arrive at your own theological conclusions about women's involvement in the life of the church?

Carmer: It's hard to trace the origin of ideas. There are few that are polished products of a deliberative process. We grow up with things and become conscious of them. We reject them, doubt them, leave them, or keep them. My rather evolving notion of women in the church is a product of my own experience growing up.

I have an older sister who attended a very conservative Bible institute and so my exposure to some really conservative stuff came through her. I was a part of a holiness tradition, in which women were mostly relegated to music and children's education although they exercised a ton of influence and provided leadership (but not positionally.) Women wouldn't be up front preaching and stuff like that. But, what I saw in my sister's experience was this embrace of rigid definition of positions, roles, and expressions of personality that were permitted or expected for one gender and not for another. As I got older and started thinking about the church, it seemed artificially constructed to me. There were a number of things, that seemed to be capitulations of broader cultural and social norms rather than a response to the Gospel.

I spent a little time as I was studying sociology and theology, looking at some of that issue. I don't think gender is a sociological construct. I think there are some deep differences. Before I got married, I used to think there was more social construction of gender before I got married. My wife is a strong competent woman who knows her mind and speaks it. She hasn't been concerned with feminist issues, mostly because she hasn't felt the pinch of those limitations. But, even with a woman like that, we both kind of laugh about things that are stereotypically male and female. The other piece of that equation, of reflecting God's image, is it seems that

together male and female reflect God's image. In all of nature there are tendencies, but also continuums. An artificial imposition of expectation of personality is ridiculous to me.

So, to sum up: the exposure to that real conservative stuff came through my sister. Part of that exposure was to see her go through some crippling effects, like dating relationships. She would never speak her mind, or show her heart, to guys she was interested in because she had been tutored and her own personality embraced that tutoring. This notion, that only a male should pursue the female. That's how it has to be. It's her job just to be there and if he's interested he'll pursue her. But she should never take initiative. And if she does take initiative, she should cloak it as only a friendly relationship without ever speaking her heart.

Interviewer: Have there been mentors or people who shaped your thinking about gender?

Carmer: I've always been surrounded by men who have respect for women and treat them respectfully, who have treated them as colleagues and competent contributors. Also, I've had the privilege of being taught by women who are competent teachers, and not just teachers but individuals whom I respect and admire; who display character qualities that bring out more in me than I would realize on my own.

Knowing particular women who teach and exercise authority, by the integrity of their character and who contribute to the welfare of the community seemed to me to create a plausibility structure in my mind that resisted any cognitive notion or theological construct that would deny the reality of their existence and who they were.

Interviewer: What about your church tradition?

Carmer: My grandfather was a Wesleyan Methodist minister and quite conservative. In that tradition, there were narrow prescriptions on what woman could and couldn't do. As I experienced it, I never saw a woman pastor or preacher; but there were a lot of women who would do the social work, whether that was foreign missions, or local outreach in the community, or care for families or individuals in the church. There were always women who did that. They did

this in a celebrated way. This was acknowledged as important work of the church, and there were women who were doing it, and doing a great job at it. But still, in the home there were very traditionalist notions. There were roles that dad plays and roles that mom plays. Some issues of family life are open for discussion and there are some that are not.

My grandmother was a minister's wife. My grandmother married my grandfather when they were in college at Houghton. His first job was as a pastor at a little church in Michigan. For her that impacted a number of things: the kind of resources she had for the care of the house (and it was expected that she would run the household.) She had very little resources to do that with. Secondly, there were places and events that she was expected to be at as the pastor's wife.

One thing they would do was call on members of the congregation and visit them in their homes. It was an honor for people to receive a visit from the pastor. He would provide some kind of a sense of authority and comfort that comes with somebody important calling on them. My guess is that it was really my grandmother who really provided comfort. In terms of praying with folks, crying with people, and rejoicing with them.

Interviewer: Tell me about your conversations with Christian women and men on this topic of gender.

Carmer: I remember one women in particular. During college I said, "You know you ought to be the pastor." She was dating a guy who was a biblical studies major and within that tradition that's all the education he would need to take a pastorate—a B.A. degree. I was joking with this woman, who was dating him, who was a friend of mine (her name was Kit.) And, I said, "Kit, you should be a pastor." Her only response was to say, "oh, you're silly."

That was indicative of two things—one, her personality. She really wanted to be a mom. But also the prevailing culture there, within this subculture of Free Methodism for a woman to become a pastor was an issue that was filled with tension. The conversation was starting to happen more publicly and some people were pushing it forward. I remember thinking even then, *It's a little sad for her, and*

for others in our peer group. She was a bright student with a knack for asking good questions. She ought to be a part of those elder board meetings, when the pastor and six men are talking about church direction, policy decisions, where the church is moving, allocation of resources, what should the church care about. It would benefit by having her there in that setting.

During that same season of college, I was exposed to a couple of female pastors. How I read it as an 18 year old was that it had cost them so much socially and emotionally to become a female pastor that they needed to channel all of their energy into that. There was a deep insecurity and they would present in a way of grabbing power, trying to assert influence or themselves in a way that was unattractive and non-winsome. And it made me sad for them, thinking, *haven't we messed things up, that here is a woman who maybe in a different environment could have grown into a position of leadership and could have allowed her to freely be who she was.* Instead, both the combination of the social environment and her own stuff has cost her so much that she isn't free; she isn't freely gifting the church with her presence. Maybe she is being a thorn in the flesh, trying to push the church in some ways, but doing it in a way that isn't attractive. It doesn't make me think, Yeah, I want you to be my pastor.

So I avoided the issue because any of the women who did want to talk about it, I didn't like. And it wasn't because I didn't know how to respond to strong, competent women, but they struck me as weak women trying to act like strong women. They were trying to adjust a maladjustment within the church, and it wasn't working so well.

I have conversations now with students. With men, I tend to push the issue. Like, if you have attitudes or expectations such that are going to limit or bind what your sisters have to offer, then you are costing the church the gifts of the Spirit. God has gifted the church and you are keeping it in a box if you don't align your attitudes and behaviors in such a way so that your sister can contribute.

With women I approach the conversation a bit differently. I try to veer away from the theoretical question, and ask, "Who are you? Who has God made you to be? Who has He gifted you to be? What cares has he put in your heart?"

How can you pursue those cares? Pray that doors will open in a context where you can pursue those cares and can give those gifts as freely as possible.

Interviewer: Why do you think you approach them differently?

Carmer: It's a pastoral thing. I used to be more heady, though ideas still are my native language. I think to seize the opportunity that these 20 minutes present with this student. I don't want to talk about abstract ideas I want to talk about them. With this gender thing, it tends to be an idea for guys. For women it tends to be a roadblock often they need permission to go a certain way, or assurance that they can be who God has called them to be.

In my class, there is a great woman who is one of the brightest students. Of all of the students, if any could excel in graduate work, it would be her. But, she really wants to be a mom. So for her, it isn't helpful to say, "Go be a leader." I need to free her up by saying, "You have a bright mind and you'll use it. It's okay to be a mom too; I want you to do that with as much of your mind engaged as you can. Bring all that stuff to bear, and not just for your kids, but for your friend's kids. Be all of who you are." I try to speak to their lives, to the concrete realities they are dealing with. Even though I am primarily oriented toward abstract ideas, ideas need to serve the greater good of encouraging, building and equipping souls, rather than souls becoming somehow subservient to line up with some abstract idea. Ideas are extremely important, but they take second to human lives.

Interviewer: What recommendations do you have for women who end up in conversations about this topic of gender?

Carmer: My recommendations would need to be specific to the individual. There are a dozen different positions from which women speak. One of those that come to mind are women who are not natural leaders. And, if they are, it has been crippled by their needing to prove it. They have an aggressive need to fight it. I would tell them to relax. It's okay to have this conversation.

The second kind is the woman who, in a partisan way, believes she has found truth and stands by that, saying this is what we believe! For her it provides safety. She would

say, the world is okay as long as I understand it. For these women, my advice would be I'd want them to understand spiritual transcendence, to know the God within them, not codified, God as present, keeping me alive. I would recommend that they learn that so they could temper the conversation somehow, so that it is less political and driving.

Then, the third kind: women who are confident in themselves and have a firm sense of their identity. They are equal to what life has to offer them. Their concern is pushing the church on this issue, being a voice of education and correction. For them, I would encourage them to use humor that disarms other folks, to understand different levels of conversation, to be engaged in the theological and theoretical ideals but also to understand that this isn't the only place for the conversation to be happening. It's also social. I'd affirm them: When it comes time to respond to a theological position paper to do that with confidence. When it comes to a dinner table conversation, do that with humor and confidence and courage. It's social agility.

It's a rare gift for those who are equally competent across different levels of discourse. Whether it's playful joking, pastoral counseling, intense dialogue, or intellectual engagement, I would encourage folks to practice that. Meet the audience where the audience is, whether it's a couple or a congregation to pull them along with winsomeness. Let your own life shine before those folks. They can dismiss your exegesis of Paul's letters, but they can't dismiss your own life. Force them with winsomeness and humor to confront a theological framework that's big enough to encapsulate the reality of you.

APPENDIX D

POSITIONAL STATEMENTS FROM

THE COUNCIL FOR BIBLICAL MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD

AND

CHRISTIANS FOR BIBLICAL EQUALITY

THE COUNCIL FOR BIBLICAL MANHOOD
AND WOMANHOOD: THE DANVERS STATEMENT²⁴⁹

The "Danvers Statement" summarizes the need for the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) and serves as an overview of our core beliefs. This statement was prepared by several evangelical leaders at a CBMW meeting in Danvers, Massachusetts, in December of 1987. It was first published in final form by the CBMW in Wheaton, Illinois in November of 1988.

Rationale

We have been moved in our purpose by the following contemporary developments which we observe with deep concern:

The widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the complementary differences between masculinity and femininity;

the tragic effects of this confusion in unraveling the fabric of marriage woven by God out of the beautiful and diverse strands of manhood and womanhood;

the increasing promotion given to feminist egalitarianism with accompanying distortions or neglect of the glad harmony portrayed in Scripture between the loving, humble leadership of redeemed husbands and the intelligent, willing support of that leadership by redeemed wives;

the widespread ambivalence regarding the values of motherhood, vocational homemaking, and the many ministries historically performed by women;

the growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have Biblically and historically been considered illicit or perverse, and the increase in pornographic portrayal of human sexuality;

the upsurge of physical and emotional abuse in the family;

the emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership that do not conform to Biblical teaching but backfire in the crippling of Biblically faithful witness;

the increasing prevalence and acceptance of hermeneutical oddities devised to reinterpret apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts;

the consequent threat to Biblical authority as the clarity of Scripture is jeopardized and the accessibility of its meaning to ordinary people is withdrawn into the restricted realm

²⁴⁹ John Piper and Wayne Grudem eds. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, "The Danvers Statement" (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991) 469-472.

of technical ingenuity;

and behind all this the apparent accommodation of some within the church to the spirit of the age at the expense of winsome, radical Biblical authenticity which in the power of the Holy Spirit may reform rather than reflect our ailing culture.

Purposes

Recognizing our own abiding sinfulness and fallibility, and acknowledging the genuine evangelical standing of many who do not agree with all of our convictions, nevertheless, moved by the preceding observations and by the hope that the noble Biblical vision of sexual complementarity may yet win the mind and heart of Christ's church, we engage to pursue the following purposes:

To study and set forth the Biblical view of the relationship between men and women, especially in the home and in the church.

To promote the publication of scholarly and popular materials representing this view.

To encourage the confidence of lay people to study and understand for themselves the teaching of Scripture, especially on the issue of relationships between men and women.

To encourage the considered and sensitive application of this Biblical view in the appropriate spheres of life.

And thereby

to bring healing to persons and relationships injured by an inadequate grasp of God's will concerning manhood and womanhood,

to help both men and women realize their full ministry potential through a true understanding and practice of their God-given roles,

and to promote the spread of the gospel among all peoples by fostering a Biblical wholeness in relationships that will attract a fractured world.

Affirmations

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18).

Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Gen 2:18, 21-24; 1 Cor 11:7-9; 1 Tim 2:12-14).

Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin (Gen 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1 Cor 11:7-9).

The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Gen 3:1-7, 12, 16).

In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.

In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.

The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18; Gal 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Tim 2:11-15).

Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.

In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; Tit 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:1-7).

In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 1 Tim 2:11-15).

In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Dan 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Pet 3:1-2).

In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.

With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Cor 12:7-21).

We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

CHRISTIANS FOR BIBLICAL EQUALITY: STATEMENT ON MEN, WOMEN AND BIBLICAL EQUALITY²⁵⁰

The Bible teaches the full equality of men and women in Creation and in Redemption (Gen 1:26-28, 2:23, 5:1-2; 1Cor 11:11-12; Gal 3:13, 28, 5:1).

The Bible teaches that God has revealed Himself in the totality of Scripture, the authoritative Word of God (Matt 5:18; John 10:35; 2Tim 3:16; 2Pet 1:20-21). We believe that Scripture is to be interpreted holistically and thematically. We also recognize the necessity of making a distinction between inspiration and interpretation: inspiration relates to the divine impulse and control whereby the whole canonical Scripture is the Word of God; interpretation relates to the human activity whereby we seek to apprehend revealed truth in harmony with the totality of Scripture and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. To be truly biblical, Christians must continually examine their faith and practice under the searchlight of Scripture.

Biblical Truths

Creation

1. The Bible teaches that both man and woman were created in God's image, had a direct relationship with God, and shared jointly the responsibilities of bearing and rearing children and having dominion over the created order (Gen 1:26-28).
2. The Bible teaches that woman and man were created for full and equal partnership. The word "helper" (*ezer*), used to designate woman in Genesis 2:18, refers to God in most instances of Old Testament usage (e.g. 1Sam 7:12; Ps 121:1-2). Consequently the word conveys no implication whatsoever of female subordination or inferiority.
3. The Bible teaches that the forming of woman from man demonstrates the fundamental unity and equality of human beings (Gen 2:21-23). In Genesis 2:18, 20 the word "suitable" (*kenegdo*) denotes equality and adequacy.
4. The Bible teaches that man and woman were co-participants in the Fall: Adam was no less culpable than Eve (Gen 3:6; Rom 5:12-21; 1Cor 15:21-22).
5. The Bible teaches that the rulership of Adam over Eve resulted from the Fall and was therefore not a part of the original created order. Genesis 3:16 is a prediction of the effects of the Fall rather than a prescription of God's ideal order.

²⁵⁰ CBE's statement, "Men, Women, and Biblical Equality" lays out the biblical rationale for equality as well as its application in the community of believers and the family. Available in 23 languages! NEW: Bulgarian, Dutch, Kiswahili, Marathi, Nepali and Polish. Christians for Biblical Equality. "Men, Women and Biblical Equality" (Minneapolis, MN: 1989) www.cbeinternational.org

Redemption

6. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ came to redeem women as well as men. Through faith in Christ we all become children of God, one in Christ, and heirs to the blessings of salvation without reference to racial, social, or gender distinctives (Jn 1:12-13; Rom 8:14-17; 2Cor 5:17; Gal 3:26-28).

Community

7. The Bible teaches that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit came on men and women alike. Without distinction, the Holy Spirit indwells women and men, and sovereignly distributes gifts without preference as to gender (Acts 2:1-21; 1Cor 12:7, 11, 14:31).

8. The Bible teaches that both women and men are called to develop their spiritual gifts and to use them as stewards of the grace of God (1Pet 4:10-11). Both men and women are divinely gifted and empowered to minister to the whole Body of Christ, under His authority (Acts 1:14, 18:26, 21:9; Rom 16:1-7, 12-13, 15; Phil 4:2-3; Col 4:15; see also Mk 15:40-41, 16:1-7; Lk 8:1-3; John 20:17-18; compare also Old Testament examples: Judges 4:4-14, 5:7; 2Chron 34:22-28; Prov 31:30-31; Micah 6:4).

9. The Bible teaches that, in the New Testament economy, women as well as men exercise the prophetic, priestly and royal functions (Acts 2:17-18, 21:9; 1Cor 11:5; 1Pet 2:9-10; Rev 1:6, 5:10). Therefore, the few isolated texts that appear to restrict the full redemptive freedom of women must not be interpreted simplistically and in contradiction to the rest of Scripture, but their interpretation must take into account their relation to the broader teaching of Scripture and their total context (1Cor 11:2-16, 14:33-36; 1Tim 2:9-15).

10. The Bible defines the function of leadership as the empowerment of others for service rather than as the exercise of power over them (Matt 20:25-28, 23:8; Mk 10:42-45; Jn 13:13-17; Gal 5:13; 1Pet 5:2-3).

Family

11. The Bible teaches that husbands and wives are heirs together of the grace of life and that they are bound together in a relationship of mutual submission and responsibility (1Cor 7:3-5; Eph 5:21; 1Pet 3:1-7; Gen 21:12). The husband's function as "head" (*kephale*) is to be understood as self-giving love and service within this relationship of mutual submission (Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:19; 1Pet 3:7).

12. The Bible teaches that both mothers and fathers are to exercise leadership in the nurture, training, discipline and teaching of their children (Ex 20:12; Lev 19:3; Deut 6:6-9, 21:18-21, 27:16; Prov 1:8, 6:20; Eph 6:1-4; Col 3:20; 2Tim 1:5; see also Luke 2:51).

Application

Community

1. In the church, spiritual gifts of women and men are to be recognized, developed and used in serving and teaching ministries at all levels of involvement: as small group leaders, counselors, facilitators, administrators, ushers, communion servers, and board members, and in pastoral care, teaching, preaching, and worship.

In so doing, the church will honor God as the source of spiritual gifts. The church will also fulfill God's mandate of stewardship without the appalling loss to God's kingdom that results when half of the church's members are excluded from positions of responsibility.

2. In the church, public recognition is to be given to both women and men who exercise ministries of service and leadership.

In so doing, the church will model the unity and harmony that should characterize the community of believers. In a world fractured by discrimination and segregation, the church will dissociate itself from worldly or pagan devices designed to make women feel inferior for being female. It will help prevent their departure from the church or their rejection of the Christian faith.

Family

3. In the Christian home, husband and wife are to defer to each other in seeking to fulfill each other's preferences, desires and aspirations. Neither spouse is to seek to dominate the other but each is to act as servant of the other, in humility considering the other as better than oneself. In case of decisional deadlock they should seek resolution through biblical methods of conflict resolution rather than by one spouse imposing a decision upon the other.

In so doing, husband and wife will help the Christian home stand against improper use of power and authority by spouses and will protect the home from wife and child abuse that sometimes tragically follows a hierarchical interpretation of the husband's "headship."

4. In the Christian home, spouses are to learn to share the responsibilities of leadership on the basis of gifts, expertise, and availability, with due regard for the partner most affected by the decision under consideration.

In so doing, spouses will learn to respect their competencies and their complementarity. This will prevent one spouse from becoming the perennial loser, often forced to practice ingratiating or deceitful manipulation to protect self-esteem. By establishing their marriage on a partnership basis, the couple will protect it from joining the tide of dead or broken marriages resulting from marital inequities.

5. In the Christian home, couples who share a lifestyle characterized by the freedom they find in Christ will do so without experiencing feelings of guilt or resorting to hypocrisy. They are freed to emerge from an unbiblical "traditionalism" and can rejoice

in their mutual accountability in Christ.

In so doing, they will openly express their obedience to Scripture, will model an example for other couples in quest of freedom in Christ, and will stand against patterns of domination and inequality sometimes imposed upon church and family.

We believe that biblical equality as reflected in this document is true to Scripture.

We stand united in our conviction that the Bible, in its totality, is the liberating Word that provides the most effective way for women and men to exercise the gifts distributed by the Holy Spirit and thus to serve God.

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